

# *The Jane Austen Society*



**Report for 2011**

# *The Jane Austen Society*

Founded in 1940 by Miss Dorothy Darnell

Registered Charity No. 1040613

[www.janeaustensociety.org.uk](http://www.janeaustensociety.org.uk)

*President* Richard Knight

*Vice-Presidents* Irene Collins, Helen Lefroy, Diana Shervington

*Chairman* David Selwyn

*Vice-Chairman* Elizabeth Proudman

*Hon. Treasurer* Bruce Johnstone

*Hon. Secretary* Maureen Stiller, 20 Parsonage Road, Henfield, West Sussex

BN5 9JG email: [hq@jasoc.org.uk](mailto:hq@jasoc.org.uk)

*Membership Secretary* Rosemary Culley, 22 Belmont Grove, Bedhampton, Havant, Hants

PO9 3PU tel: 02392 481073 email: [rvculley@gmail.com](mailto:rvculley@gmail.com)

*Committee* Fiona Ainsworth, Sharron Bassett, Tony Corley, Anthony Finney,  
Clare Graham, Richard Jenkyns, Marilyn Joice, Deirdre Le Faye, Lesley Wilson

*Accountants to the Society* Messrs Sheen Stickland & Co, Alton

*Editor* David Selwyn

*Assistant Editor* Mary Hogg

Articles to be considered for publication in the *Report* should be sent by email to:

[d.selwyn.1@btinternet.com](mailto:d.selwyn.1@btinternet.com) Otherwise by post to The Editor, 8 Barrow Court,

Barrow Gurney, Bristol BS48 3RP

Annual subscription rates:	Standard	£20
	Overseas	£30
	Joint (one address)	£25
	Student (for up to 3 years)	£10
	Corporate	£50

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*Front cover: Jane Marcet in her library, artist unknown, by kind permission of Tom Pasteur (see p. 71).*

*Rear cover: James Gillray, Political-Ravishment, or the Old Lady of Threadneedle-Street in danger! (see p. 44).*

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# *THE JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY*

## *Members' Forum*

*Saturday 27 October 2012, 2pm*

*The Learning Centre,  
Jane Austen's House Museum,  
Chawton*

As the Jane Austen Society approaches its 75th anniversary in 2015, this will offer a pleasant opportunity for members to gather with the Chairman for an entirely informal discussion about any matters of interest that they wish to raise relating to the Society. To suggest topics in advance, please write to the Chairman or send an email: [d.selwyn.1@btinternet.com](mailto:d.selwyn.1@btinternet.com) Otherwise, just turn up. It is envisaged that the meeting will last about 1½ hours, after which participants may like to adjourn to Cassandra's Cup for tea.

This is the first of a projected series of Members' Forums which will be held from time to time in different parts of the country.

## *Report for 2011*

Now that each issue of the *Annual Report* has assumed the proportions of a book – thanks to the large number of talented and enthusiastic writers who contribute the fruits of their research with such generosity – it is no longer feasible to publish five volumes together in collected form, at least without putting our readers in serious danger of spraining their wrist. Nevertheless the cumulative indexes remain essential, we believe, to the maximum scholarly use that can be made of the *Reports*, and so we have decided to continue to commission them for every five numbers; they will then be sold separately – as will the *Reports* themselves – or alternatively as part of a package of five yearly copies, no doubt at a reduced rate. While we are sure that the indexes will be of use to members, the packages of five *Reports* and index will, we hope, be bought, as the *Collected Reports* have always been, by scholars and enthusiasts outside the Society; and we shall of course continue to present them to libraries, universities and institutions whose users will thereby benefit from that educational aspect of the Society's work which is one of its most important charitable objects.

Naturally, if ever the supply of articles and other material on Jane Austen, her times, her family and her connections were to dry up, we should no doubt revert to small-scale *Reports* which could then be bound together again; I am pleased to say, however, that all the evidence at present suggests that this is a highly unlikely contingency.

## *Minutes of the Annual General Meeting*

held on Saturday 16 July 2011  
at Chawton House, Hampshire  
(by courtesy of Chawton House Library)

1. **The President**, Richard Knight, welcomed members to the meeting.
2. **Apologies**
3. **Minutes** of the AGM 2010 were approved by the meeting.
4. **Officers' Reports**

**The Vice-Chairman, Elizabeth Proudman**, opened the meeting to note that David Selwyn, the Chairman, had been unable to attend owing to ill health and that it was with trepidation that she was undertaking the daunting task of making the report to the meeting in his stead. David combined his role of Chairman with that

of Editor of the Society's *Annual Report* and *NewsLetter*, and in having to proof-read the *Annual Report* in his absence, it had only underlined how much was due to him in that role. Thanks were extended to Helen Lefroy and Mary Hogg for the excellent help they had given.

In endorsing the President's welcome to members, from both home and overseas, she also noted that a group of JASNA members would be joining the afternoon meeting. It was noted that JASNA continued to give generously to various sites associated with the Austens and in the previous 2 years had donated over \$21,383.

The Officers and members of the Committee had met twice in Chawton and once in London during the year and had, as usual, worked very hard throughout the year to ensure the smooth running of the Society and to deal with the various matters, both new and on-going, that had arisen from members, the general public, and the media. She asked all the members of the Committee to stand up and be recognised. She praised the work of the Honorary Secretary, Maureen Stiller, the Treasurer, Bruce Johnstone, and the Minutes Secretary, Fiona Ainsworth, together with the other trustees (listed inside the front cover of the *Annual Report*). Other people who worked hard for the Society but who were not trustees were the Membership Secretary, Rosemary Culley, and the Society's Web Manager, Brian Joice. Last but not least, she paid tribute to the Society's President, Richard Knight, for his advice, help and support, including his attendance at Committee meetings, and his connection with Chawton House Library, of which he was a Trustee, which allowed the AGM to be held in the grounds.

It was with very great sadness that she recorded the deaths of two of the Society's Vice-Presidents, both of whom had contributed so much to the Society and to anyone interested in the life and work of Jane Austen. Elizabeth Jenkins, the first modern biographer of Jane Austen and one of the founders of the Society, had died at the age of 104 in September 2010; and Brian Southam, Chairman of the Society for 15 years, had died at the age of 79 in October 2010. The Vice-Chairman was delighted that Brian's widow, Doris, had been able to attend the meeting, which she would later address, and tributes would, additionally, be paid to both Vice-Presidents in the afternoon session by Helen Lefroy and Maggie Lane. She also warmly welcomed the Society's other Vice-Presidents, Irene Collins, Helen Lefroy and Diana Shervington. It was with sadness that she also recorded the death of Jon Spence, of the Australian Jane Austen Society, and the author of *Becoming Jane Austen*.

Progress with various projects had been made during the year. As reported in the 2010 Chairman's Report, Vivian Branson of the Kent Branch had been working with others to have the grave of Jane's great-uncle Francis Austen of Sevenoaks marked in some way, but unfortunately all of Vivian's hard work had come to nought, as this had finally proved impossible. As reported in the 2010 Chairman's Report, there was serious concern about the state of the Jane Austen Garden in Lyme Regis, following cliff stabilisation works. Diana Shervington had since been in contact with the council and provided them with plants. There was

now some planting, which had improved the look of the area, and consideration was being given to the renewal of the commemorative plaque. Henry Austen's wife, Eliza, had been buried with her mother and son in the churchyard of St John at Hampstead. This was also the burial place of many other famous people and Camden Council had been given a Lottery grant to create an audio tour of the cemetery, in which the Austen graves were to be included.

As reported in the 2010 Chairman's Report, the Society had contributed towards the restoration of the portrait of Edward Austen (Knight). The portrait had now been re-hung in Chawton House Library and could be seen when the House opened on 10 September 2011 free of charge as part of the Open Heritage Days programme; a reproduction of the portrait had been presented to Jane Austen's House Museum in lieu of the original. Guided tours were also given (for a fee) by the House on Tuesdays and Saturdays during the season, but booking on these was advised. Members of the Society were reminded that anyone might come and use the library: it was only necessary to telephone to make an appointment.

The Society had paid £500 to sponsor a document in the John Murray Archive held in the National Library of Scotland; this was the original subscription list for *Mansfield Park*. The Society had been included in the list of donors and had been presented with a certificate recording the sponsorship.

It was reported that the Committee had decided with regret that, as a result of ever-rising costs, it was no longer financially viable to offer Life Membership of the Society. As reported in the 2010 Chairman's Report, however, the Revd Michael Kenning had retired as rector of Steventon and in recognition of his great friendship with the Society over the past 18 years and his promotion of the knowledge of Jane Austen, the Committee had appointed him an Honorary Life Member.

Sharron Bassett, a trustee of the Society, continued to work on creating a Society Archive of all its documents which would, eventually, be available for scholarly research purposes. The newly constituted Education Subcommittee, referred to in the Chairman's 2010 Report, had been working on producing a CD with text and pictures which members could request to use as a basis for a lecture or presentation on Jane Austen to community groups. It was thought that members would find it easier to have a framework on which to work and would also ensure conformity of information about Jane Austen. Since the education programme at Jane Austen's House Museum generally concentrated on schools and local groups, the Society's target would be general adult groups not based near Chawton. There had been no new Society publications in 2010 but the Society's *Collected Reports* continued to be distributed to universities etc by Lesley Wilson. There were, however, plenty of current publications on sale on the Society's stall.

In September 2010, the Society had held a very successful conference based in Harrogate, which was attended by 80 delegates. Visits had been made to Richmond's Georgian buildings and to the historic quay in Hartlepool, where HMS *Trincomalee*, a ship known to Francis Austen, was docked. There had been

talks about Georgian Harrogate; music of the time given by Adrienne and Robert Bradney-Smith and Gillian Dooley; a talk on spas by Dr Cheryl Kinney from Texas under the title of 'The Idlest Haunts in the Kingdom'; 'The Education of Girls' by Professor Vivien Jones and 'Pictures of Perfection' by Dr Bill Hutchings. As usual, the conference had been organised by Patrick Stokes, with the help of Marilyn Joice and members of the Northern Branch, and thanks were extended to all of them for their work. Papers from the conference were included in the *Annual Report* for the benefit of members who had been unable to attend. The 2011 conference would be held on 1-4 September in Sidmouth to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Sense and Sensibility*, and members were advised to check with Patrick Stokes as to the availability of places. Future locations for conferences had been announced as follows: 2012 Oxfordshire; 2013 Brighton (for *Pride and Prejudice*); 2014 Northamptonshire for *Mansfield Park* and 2015 Scotland for *Emma*.

The annual London Study Day had been held in February at Senate House, University of London, under the title of 'Jane Austen and the Cultural Currents of her Time'. Danielle Grover had given a talk on music in *Sir Charles Grandison*; Professor Markman Ellis on banking and the credit crunch; Professor Helen Atkinson and Alanah Buck on the life of Henry Edgar Austen; Alan Thwaite on 'Lunaticks, Boys' Toys and Heroines'; and Emma Clery on the culture of enterprise in *Mansfield Park*. The Study Day would probably continue to be held in London as being convenient for travel for most members and would be held in Spring so as not to be too close to the Autumn conference.

The annual meeting of all the Groups and Branches, coordinated by Clare Graham, was held in February and attended by 11 regional representatives and 9 members of the Committee. The representatives shared reports of their activities and advice, and it was obvious that there was an amazing amount of activity throughout the UK, with the newest South Western Branch flourishing under the guidance of Maggie Lane. Accounts of Group and Branch events were included in the *Annual Report*, and forthcoming events, covering a wide range of interests, were included in the *NewsLetter* and posted on the website, so members were encouraged to consult these to find out what was happening in their region.

Following on the article in the *Annual Report* about Benjamin Britten's aborted attempt to write an opera based on *Mansfield Park*, members would be interested to hear that the opera *Mansfield Park* written by Jonathan Dove would have its premiere at Broughton House, Northamptonshire on 30 July followed by a 10-day tour of England. Details had been posted on the Society's website. Members would also have been interested in the recent auction of the original manuscript of *The Watsons* at Sothebys. Originally estimated to achieve £200,000, it was sold, to a round of applause, for £993,256 to the Bodleian Library, which acquired it with the help of a grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund; a small grant was also made by Jane Austen's House Museum, which would give them an entitlement to display the document at some stage.

One of the aims of the Society was to support the work of Jane Austen's House



and many members would have already heard of the appointment of Louise West as curator in October 2010, following Tom Carpenter's retirement; Louise would be giving a short presentation at the afternoon session. It was hoped that Tom would continue to attend future Society AGMs and he was thanked for all his kindness to the Society over the years.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Mr Freeman for once again laying on the vintage bus service from Alton station for members, which he was running in memory of his mother, Jean Freeman.

Finally, looking to the wider world, Mark Crick, author of a book entitled *Kafka's Soup* which set out suitable recipes for literary figures, believed that Jane Austen would have cooked Tarragon Eggs, while Hampshire County Council was recommending an Austen-themed 'Staycation'. Perhaps the most exciting revelation of all was that of Ancestor.com, which had discovered that one of the new Duchess of Cambridge's claims to fame was that she was an 11th cousin 6 times removed of Jane Austen, as they were both descended from Henry Percy, 4th Duke of Northumberland!

**The President** thanked the Vice-Chairman for her report.

**The Honorary Secretary**, Maureen Stiller, advised that the membership figures for the year ended 30 June 2011 stood at 1537. This figure took account of 63 members who had joined during the year, 10 who had resigned, 12 who had died and 2 whose post had been returned; it excluded members whose subscriptions were overdue.

Some members had not updated their subscription payments to reflect the new fee of £20 and she asked if they would check their Bank statements, direct debits or standing orders to ensure the correct payment was made. She also reminded members to notify Rosemary Culley, the Membership Secretary, if they had moved, or were moving house, or had changed their Bank; and to ensure that their Bank included their full membership number on any payment made to the Society on their behalf.

**The Honorary Treasurer**, Bruce Johnstone, referred to the Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending December 2010 reproduced in the Society's current *Annual Report*, which had been independently examined, and which showed a deficit of income against expenditure. This had not been unexpected but it was not easy to identify a single cause in the light of current economic difficulties. Return on capital remained very low and the Committee was reviewing ways of improving this, together with fundraising options generally.

Although membership remained stable, subscriptions income was lower to reflect those that were overdue and others that continued to be paid at the lower rate. He urged members to ensure that their payments were made when due and at the current rates as published in the *Annual Report*.

Sales of publications had shown a welcome improvement in the year and it was

hoped that this would continue with recent initiatives to widen market exposure and provide easier means of purchasing.

Although there appeared to be a large reduction in income from Branches, this was offset by an equivalent reduction in expenditure, leading to a net income only slightly lower than the previous year. The Treasurer thanked the Branches for their continuing hard work and support. He noted that income from Society events and expenditure would no longer be included in the accounts since the purpose of these events was not to generate funds but to contribute generally to the aims of the Society.

Gift Aid income had been significantly high in 2009 because it included back recovery from 2002. As predicted, therefore, income from that source in 2010 was comparatively low. However, the amount shown was provisional, pending settlement of the claim and reduction in subscription arrears, where Gift Aid will also improve refunds.

The Treasurer concluded that the Society's underlying financial position was strong but, in the light of expenditure rising faster than income, the Committee was determined to keep all aspects of finance under review and to take action where appropriate to reverse the trend. The membership unanimously approved the Accounts.

## **5. Any Other Business**

5.1 The Treasurer confirmed that a bequest to the Society of £10,000 had been made in the Will of Elizabeth Jenkins, and the Committee would consider how this might be used.

5.2 The Membership Secretary advised that membership numbers could be found on the address labels on the envelopes containing the *Annual Report* and *NewsLetter*.

## **6. Date of Next Meeting**

Saturday 21 July 2012

## *Branches and groups*

### *Bath and Bristol*

This past year has been very productive, with some innovations that have proved most successful. In November, Anne and Michael Davis opened their drawing room to the Group for a discussion on *Sense and Sensibility*; eight of us sat down to talk about the book which gave us all food for thought and was an extremely enjoyable way to spend a winter's afternoon. This was the first time we had organized an event of this kind and we plan to have another discussion group later in the year. Our next event was Cassandra's birthday tea in January, this being an easier month for people generally than December. Lisa White, in spite of a very busy academic life, kindly agreed to talk to us on 'Jane Austen and Home Comforts'. Until recently, we have held the event in a local hotel, but when the management decided to offer Sunday lunches, we lost our room! So we joined forces with the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution in Queen Square and booked ourselves in there instead. A large audience gathered under the Casali paintings in BRLSI's first floor room to hear her and thoroughly enjoyed what was not only an interesting subject but one that had us all laughing. Our AGM in April attracted another large audience to hear Dr Roger Rolls talk on 'Medicine in the Time of Jane Austen'; Dr Rolls is an acknowledged expert on the subject and had some fascinating pictures to illustrate his talk. On both occasions the talks were followed by tea, which made a very satisfactory end to two happy occasions.

*Diana White*

### *Cambridge*

The Cambridge Group continues to flourish and has just acquired its first transatlantic member. Some of our members have been claimed by mortality but new members have arrived so, on the whole, we keep a steady state. We meet five times a year and have a twice-annual Newsletter.

Last year our programme of events began in March with a visit to King's College Library. King's holds an unrivalled collection of Austeniana and Dr Jones, Fellow and Librarian of Kings, put together a superb exhibition for us. In 1990 Dorothy Warren gave the college her collection of Austen manuscripts and books – one of the most splendid gifts King's has ever received. It was fascinating to see the history of one volume – Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, owned by Jane Austen and later by Virginia Woolf, who then gave it to Maynard Keynes, a great admirer of Jane Austen. Dorothy Warren chose King's for her collection because of the college's long connection with the Austen family through the Austen-Leighs. Augustus Austen-Leigh was Provost (1889 – 1905) and he and his brother William (King's 1861) were great-nephews of Jane Austen. William, with his nephew R.A. Austen-Leigh (King's 1891), wrote the *Life and Letters of Jane Austen* (1913). Another benefactor was Mary Lefroy, who in 1930 gave to the college the manuscript of

*Sanditon*. We marvelled (given the state of Jane's health) at line after line of her exquisitely neat handwriting.

In May we had a very interesting talk and exhibition from Muriel Farnden on eighteenth-century artefacts. She brought items from her collection and members had a chance to handle them and to ask questions.

July saw our popular annual event, the Strawberry Tea, held this year in Keith and Hazel Mills' garden. It was a brilliant summer's day and we had a sale of books and an Austen quiz: a most enjoyable day.

In October Hazel Mills gave an excellent illustrated talk on 'Food in Jane Austen's Time'. We learned much about 'White Soup' amongst other interesting dishes. A full account of this talk is available in the Cambridge Group Newsletter No.18.

In December we held our regular Birthday Dinner at Queens' College, where the chef always excels himself at producing dishes that Jane Austen would have recognised. Our guest speaker was Dr Vivian Thomas, who gave an animated talk on Jane Austen and Shakespeare.

In 2012 we met in March for a presentation by Dr Colin Lattimore on 'Clocks Jane Austen would have known'. Dr Lattimore, an expert on eighteenth-century clocks, gave an excellent illustrated talk on time-keeping through the ages. Members loved his erudition and humour. Also in March some members of the Group met Sandy Lerner at Christ's College to hear a discussion of her novel *Second Impressions*. She read passages from the book and answered the many questions from the audience. She explained why she chose the pseudonym Ava Farmer: she is a cattle farmer in Virginia – thus 'A Virginia Farmer'. It was all very fascinating and she is generously giving all the proceeds from the sale of the books to Chawton House Library.

Altogether the Cambridge Group has had an enjoyable, interesting and informative year of activities.

*Audrey Stenner*

## *Hampshire*

We now have 128 members. We have managed to keep our subscription to £5 per person or £8 per couple living at the same address; however we are looking at ways to minimise postage costs, mainly by the use of email.

Since our AGM in May last year, we visited Steventon early in June. The weather was atrocious but everyone had a really good time, mainly thanks to the welcoming hospitality of the Steventon ladies and to the enthusiasm of both the Revd Michael Kenning and Mr Jeffrey Mann, who gave us the history of the church and the village's most famous inhabitant.

At the end of June we were lucky enough to visit Ibthorpe House in much more clement weather with Mrs Sabina French Blake as our hostess. She told us about the history of the house, showing us the room in which it is supposed Jane Austen slept on her visits to the Lloyds. Jane Austen wrote in her letters about the view of the distant hills she had from her window which could have only been viewed from

that particular room. We had a delicious tea and were able to wander around the beautiful gardens. Unfortunately, Ibthorpe House has since been sold and visits are no longer possible.

At the beginning of July, two committee members attended the Young Writers' Competition Prize Giving at Jane Austen's House. The donation the Hampshire Group gave to Jane Austen's House Museum supported the competition and enabled the Trust to present prizes of book tokens to the young writers who were there with their parents and teachers. The winning entries were published in the *NewsLetter*. This is a really worthwhile cause and we were proud to be involved; we have been asked to support the competition again this year.

Also in July a few of us attended a talk by Ruth Facer, who told us about her research into Mary Bacon, a farmer's wife contemporary with Jane Austen. Ruth had, following her research, written a really fascinating book containing all sorts of information relating to the period.

November found us once again at Alton Abbey for our study day to think about Jane Austen's writing in her letters.

Our activities for 2012 are following the theme of Jane Austen and the Army and all our visits have a link – if perhaps a somewhat tenuous one. We started the theme by having an excellent talk by Mr Rupert Willoughby on 'Jane Austen and the Army'. We were due to go to the Vyne in April but this was cancelled owing to lack of interest, and the weather was not good anyway. We are planning to go to Gilbert White's House in Selborne on 20 June and the Royal Green Jackets Museum in Winchester on 19 September.

*Lesley Wilson*

## *Kent*

The Kent Branch would like to report a very busy and successful year, with a high attendance at all our meetings, and excellent feedback from our members about the quality and amount of Austen-themed entertainment we provide for them. The year began with our AGM held on a bright spring day in March at Goodnestone Park by kind permission of our patron, Margaret, Lady FitzWalter. A military re-enactment was taking place in the park, featuring superbly costumed and accoutred figures from a Rifle Brigade of Jane Austen's time, which fitted in remarkably well with our afternoon speaker, Rupert Willoughby, whose topic was 'Jane Austen and the Army'.

Our annual summer event in June at Godmersham Park was particularly enjoyable. In the morning we were treated to actress Rebecca Vaughan's marvellous one-woman show, 'Austen's Women'. She gave us fourteen different scenes from the novels, both touching and comic, all in Jane's inimitable language. After picnics and visits to Lief Bruylant's mural and to the Godmersham Heritage Centre, we settled to listen to a thoroughly entertaining repertoire of Georgian music and readings performed by the Marsh Warblers, a Kentish-based gallery choir; the performers were in period dress and played authentic period instruments.

On a glorious day in September members were able to enjoy a guided tour of

Chilham Castle and its fine grounds, led by ex-auctioneer (so splendidly audible) Michael Peters. The house interior has been much changed, but Jane, who attended ‘the famous ball at Chilham Castle’ in 1801, would have recognised the magnificent view across the Stour Valley.

In November, the Annual Lunch again took place at Broome Park, near Canterbury. After coffee, members gathered in an elegant dining room to enjoy the dramatic presentation by Lucy Adlington from History Wardrobe, ‘Oh My Poor Nerves! Health and Hypochondria in Jane Austen’s Time’ – an excellent example of how to deliver immaculately researched history in a thoroughly entertaining way. We then settled down to lunch, only too thankful to be living in the twenty-first century.

Two events were held at the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Tonbridge during the year. In June two actors, Geoff King and Jane Bennett (no relation), drew a fascinating picture of the lives of Jane Austen’s grandparents, dressed in recreated clothing of the 1730s. Geoff talked about William’s profession of surgeon, and Jane demonstrated some elegant contemporary pastimes. On 16 December Jane’s birthday was celebrated at the church with an excellent talk given by Professor Michael Wheeler, ‘To begin at the beginning: the openings of Jane Austen’s novels’, followed by tea and delicious cakes. Audiences in Tonbridge are different from those at other Kent Branch events, a good indication of spreading knowledge across the county.

A bumper edition of *Austentations* with full-colour illustrations was published, with essays by Dr Jennie Batchelor and Dr Katie Halsey, and also featuring articles written by members of the Kent Branch, in particular regular contributors Margaret Wilson, Bridget Duckenfield and Jill Webster. The editor of *Austentations* is Branch Chairman Averil Clayton. Three full-colour editions of the Branch Newsletter also appeared, edited by Pauline Causer. Both *Austentations* and the Newsletter are free to members. Members can choose to receive the Newsletter electronically and have £1 taken off their subscriptions.

The Kent Branch continues to flourish, to delight old members and to attract new ones. Long may it do so.

*Jill Webster*

## *Midlands*

We maintained our usual programme of four events spread through the year.

At the AGM and Study Day (‘Jane Austen’s England: Country Toil and City Leisure’) at Stowe House, Lichfield in March our speakers and subjects were Mavis Smith on ‘Governesses and the 1812 Diary from Betley Hall’ and Helen Larnier on ‘London Pleasure Gardens of the 18th and 19th Centuries’. The talks were informative and lively and the ambience of the rooms, with views of the grounds, added greatly to the success of the day.

The beautiful house and grounds of Whitmore Hall looked lovely on a warm June day, when we had an excellent talk with some cross-references to Jane Austen, and then a handsome strawberry tea served to us by the family. A highlight

for those touring the grounds was the sight of a large grass snake, which was innocently basking as the Janeites hove into view, when it made its escape into the lake, swimming strongly for the far side.

In October two dozen plus members set out for a tour of Worthing in search of Jane Austen's Sanditon, staying at the Chatsworth Hotel. We heard a talk – 'Worthing in the time of Jane Austen' – given by Chris Hare, local historian, and for exercise and illumination we shared a walking tour of 'Jane Austen's Worthing' led by Janet Clarke assisted by Sue Dawes which included lunch at Pizza Express; this was formerly Standford (Standford's) Cottage, where Jane Austen and family stayed in 1805. We paid a visit to St Mary's Church Broadwater (very likely 'Old Sanditon') and were met by Church Wardens Christine Colthurst and Helen Craft, were then addressed by the Mayor of Worthing, Councillor Ann Barlow, and went on to St Mary's House Bramber for a guided tour conducted by the owners, Peter Thorogood and Roger Linton. A second talk, 'Regency Brighton, an Alternative View' was given by Geoff Mead, local historian and lecturer at Sussex University; and we finished our stay with a conducted tour of Brighton Pavilion.

At the Birthday Dinner, on 4 December in the Crown Hotel, Stone, following an excellent meal we listened to a musical entertainment from Mary Hawkes and Gill Marchment based largely on music Jane Austen herself would have played. It was most interesting to be able to put names to familiar pieces shown in the various adaptations and films. Highlight of the night was 'The Battle of Prague', given as a finalé with Gill reading from a script to inform us what the music referred to as the battle progressed.

*Christopher Sandrawich*

## *Northern*

The year began in February in Leeds and we were delighted to start 2011 with an excellent talk from our patron, Irene Collins; this was 'How to Write a Begging Letter: With Hints from Jane Austen's Novels'. The day dawned with further snow falls that caused one or two people to cancel, but thanks to Brian Joice and a snow shovel we were able to clear footpaths and the car park and 60 people arrived on time. The talk was full of Irene's inimitable charm and knowledge and insight, and the quotations were a pleasure to hear, delivered with such humour and enjoyment.

In March we were fortunate to have Maggie Lane come to York for 'Countenance, Air and Address'. This was an intriguing analysis of Jane Austen's use of the abstract noun, and it will form part of Maggie's next book. It was very well received by the 65 who attended.

In May we responded to repeated requests for a music event and were fortunate to engage Concert Royal, who gave us a wonderful concert at Heslington Church with *Jane Austen's Musical England*. Two of the instrumentalists played authentic period instruments, while the harpsichord was a replica, made using the correct materials. The soprano had the most beautiful pure voice and the performance was a mix of traditional songs and country dances, instrumental variations on popular

songs of the day, sonatas and cantatas and arias. Interspersed were some delightful readings from the novels, and interval refreshments came from *The Jane Austen Cookbook*. The afternoon was a triumph, with an audience of 78, some of whom felt moved to offer a standing ovation at the end.

The summer outing this year took us to Constable Burton Hall near Leyburn. We had such a good day! The house, a gem of our period of interest, is only open to group tours and we were fortunate to be taken round by the owner, Charles Wyvill, who really made us feel we were his house guests, offering chairs and sharing the history and anecdotes of his family. We then took to the lovely gardens with Phil Robinson, known as the Dales Plantsman, who was happy to answer our garden queries (I now know why my camellia didn't look well in its pot!).

In September we had a very well-received lecture from our treasurer, Andrew Banks; this was 'How *First Impressions* became *Pride and Prejudice*'. It was packed with information and demonstrated the meticulous research Andrew shows in the excellent articles he writes for *Impressions*.

Professor John Mullan made a very welcome return to the Northern Branch as our AGM speaker in November. His talk was 'Speechless Characters in Jane Austen'; it was so informative and such fun, delivered with John's usual energy and immense good humour. He threw lots of questions at us and really got full audience participation, and one young visitor answered the question none of us could: 'Who is the only wife who always refers to her husband by his Christian name?'

In January, May and September we published *Impressions* 34, 35 and 36 respectively. We continue to be surprised by the number of articles that keep coming, and utterly delighted by the quality and diversity. Membership stands at 160.

Marilyn Joice

### *Scottish*

Our year started well. Having postponed our Birthday Lunch because of the snowy conditions in 2010, we incorporated it into our AGM on 29 January; we were all holding our breath and crossing fingers and toes, but thankfully everything went well and we had a very successful event. Louise West gave an extremely interesting talk entitled 'Chawton Cottage: Literary Home, Literary Museum' and it was lovely to have her and her husband with us, not only to share in our AGM, but also our Birthday Lunch.

Our Symposium on 5 March was another successful event. The title was 'Jane Austen and the West Country', and we were delighted to have Jackie Herring from the Jane Austen Centre in Bath and Penny Townsend from the South West Branch with us, together with Dorothy McMillan from Glasgow University. To commemorate the publication of *Sense and Sensibility*, Dorothy McMillan gave an extremely interesting talk entitled 'Setting out her Stall: Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*'. Jackie's talk, 'Jane Austen's links with Bath', was fascinating, and Penny Townsend's talk, 'A Dip in the Sea with Jane Austen', was packed with information and humour, including having us bouncing up and down on our



seats pretending to ride a 'chamber horse' (a form of gym equipment) in time to the accompanying music. It was a lovely day and made all the more special with Jackie and Penny looking splendid in their Regency costumes.

Moving from the west of England to the west of Scotland, our Novel Study Day on 7 May was held in Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow. Nora Bartlett from St Andrews University gave a wonderful talk on *Emma* and then led an extremely interesting discussion. We have now covered all of Jane's major works; however, this event is so popular we will be continuing with further study days in the coming years.

We were back in Glasgow for our Strawberry Tea on 11 June, where we visited Pollok House, the ancestral home of the Maxwell family. The present house dates from around 1750 and contains one of the finest collections of Spanish art in the United Kingdom. During our visit we encountered some traditional 'Glasgow patter' from our Guide, which was mirrored by more traditional 'Glasgow pitter patter' in the weather. However, apart from a very rainy day, it was good to catch up with our friends in the Branch.

Maggie Lane joined us in August; it was lovely to have her back in Scotland again. Her title was 'Jane Austen and Food', and everyone had an extremely informative and enjoyable day. The event was held at Wardie Church in Edinburgh.

Our October meeting saw us back in Wardie Church to hear Dr Tony France from Ninewells Hospital, Dundee give a talk entitled 'In Sickness and in Health'. This was a return visit for Tony, who had spoken to us on Addison's disease on a previous occasion; he always manages to combine complex medical matters with an amusing presentation. Also in October, but a little further from home, we were delighted that Maureen and Tom Kelly were able to attend the JASNA Conference in Texas. Maureen gave a presentation entitled 'Did Marianne Sing Scots Songs?' which included a vocal performance, while Tom's title was 'Dads, Cads and Lads', which he gave at a break-out session.

Thankfully, we were able to hold the Birthday Lunch this year at the appropriate time. On 10 December we met at Garvock House Hotel in Dunfermline for a delicious lunch, taken from *The Jane Austen Cookbook*. Patricia Bascom entertained us with her readings entitled 'A Writer's progress – from letters to literature', and we also had fun with a questionnaire devised by Elizabeth Chapman, whereby we all had to think of Christmas presents (modern or ancient) for a number of Jane Austen's characters! Finally, Maureen Kelly gave a PowerPoint presentation on her recent trip with Tom to the JASNA Conference.

Our affiliated group, Glasgow University Students of a Jane Austen Persuasion, have also had an interesting year. Their events include an evening on 'Jane Austen and Weddings', which coincided with the Royal Wedding, a trip to Pollok House and a very successful dressing up evening with Patricia Bascom entitled 'The Business of Dressing', where Patricia gave an informal talk and everyone was able to try on costumes from a production of *Pride and Prejudice*.

In addition, a number of our members attended the AGM in Chawton again

this year; although plagued by rain, members returned with continued enthusiasm for the works of Jane Austen and the Scottish Branch.

*Ann Bates*

### *Southern Circle*

The Southern Circle is a relatively small group of about 30 members from all the South East counties of England; the group calls itself a Circle because we pride ourselves on our informality and equality. All are welcome to speak at our meetings but there is no pressure to do so. During 2011, the group met for its usual two discussion meetings at Chawton and Bookham.

The topic for the March 2011 meeting was *Sense & Sensibility*, to mark the 200th anniversary of its publication. The topic for the Autumn meeting, which was very well attended, was Jane Austen and Villains! Society members may be interested in the nominated villains (some more than once) and those who failed to make the list (Miss Bingley, Mrs Elton, Mrs Clay): Henry Crawford (2 – and 1 defender!), George Wickham, Lady Susan Vernon, Mrs Norris (3), Willoughby (2), Mrs John Dashwood (2), Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Mr Woodhouse (2), Elizabeth Elliot, Lucy Steele, General Tilney, John Thorpe (2), Mrs Robert Watson (Jane), Mary Crawford, Mr Elton, Mrs Dashwood (ie Elinor and Marianne's mother): 7 men and 9 women, which suggests that Jane Austen was even-handed in assigning villainy.

We welcome new members.

*Fiona Ainsworth*

### *South West*

In 2011 the branch continued the successful format established on inauguration in 2010: four Saturday meetings during the course of the year, with a morning speaker followed by buffet lunch and an afternoon speaker. In January, April and June we met at Exeter Castle, but we were eventually priced out in favour of the lucrative wedding market and had to look for somewhere more modest. In October we met at Southernhay Hall, attached to the United Reformed Church in Exeter city centre; it was rather like going from Norland to Barton Cottage, or from Kellynch to Camden Place. Some members grumbled, but the hall is perfectly adequate and most now accept it as our new home for the foreseeable future. The same caterer has been persuaded to lay on the same delicious lunch that we all enjoyed at the Castle.

The delight of the two-speaker format is the contrast in subject matter and approach that always results, proving what an inexhaustible study Jane Austen truly is. In January, for example, we had Sarah Parry on the influence of 'The Pemberley Effect' on the heritage industry, and Penelope Byrde on Jane Austen and fashion, both illustrated talks. In April, Gavin Turner spoke to us very knowledgeably on Jane Austen, lawyers and the law, and Angela Barlow gave her delightful talk (complete with appropriate voices) 'Jane Austen and Character: an Actor's View'. In June, Professor Bill Hutchings gave us a witty and eye-opening

talk on the artistry of *Pride and Prejudice*, and the recording company Crimson Cats spoke about Jane Austen's *Juvenilia* and played some of their recordings. In October, Angela Barlow again joined us to take part with Maggie Lane in a two-hander entitled 'A Heroine in a Hack Post-chaise'. Diana Shervington's scheduled talk had to be deferred, as she had recently been ill, so committee member Penny Townsend manfully stepped in to entertain us with a discussion of Jane Austen's letters.

Meanwhile, in September, South West branch committee members assisted in various ways at the JAS residential conference, held in Devon to mark the bicentenary of the publication of *Sense and Sensibility* (though Sidmouth is not mentioned in that novel). On the opening evening, Penny Townsend gave her illustrated talk 'A Dip in the Sea' and on Saturday morning she led a guided walk round Lyme Regis. The Sunday programme was almost all initiated by JASSW: Stephen Mahony gave a paper on money in *S&S* and Maggie followed with a talk about abstract nouns in the same novel. After coffee, Diana Shervington was interviewed by Marilyn Joice about her family connections and lifelong love of Jane Austen [see p. 18], and after lunch the conference closed with a programme of readings put together by Maggie, in which Penny and her husband Richard Townsend read the parts of Fanny and John Dashwood from the wonderful Chapter Two; Elizabeth Proudman, Angela Barlow and Diana White were the other readers, all of them superb.

Happily, Diana Shervington had recovered from her late autumn illness in good time to join with committee members in celebrating Jane Austen's birthday with lunch in Lyme Regis. I would like to thank the other members of the committee, Stephen Mahony, Hazel Jones and Penny Townsend, for all their hard work during the year. And we all extend our thanks to Diana, our Patron, for gracing our meetings with her invariable charm and good humour; she reminds us of Edward Knight's neighbour Mrs Milles, whom Jane Austen liked because she was 'cheerful [*sic*] & grateful for what she is at the age of 90 & upwards'. But probably Mrs Milles could not have given a talk on 'Why Jane Austen never married', with which Diana promises to favour us in June 2012.

*Maggie Lane*

## *A conversation between Diana Shervington and Marilyn Joice*

A transcript of the interview conducted at the Sidmouth Conference

PATRICK STOKES (Conference Chairman) It gives me great pleasure to introduce Marilyn Joice in conversation with Diana Shervington. I think that Diana Shervington is known to all of you, and as I have the good fortune to live quite near to her, and as we are distant cousins, we see a fair amount of Diana, and she is a delightful conversation companion. I also have the privilege of driving her back from conferences such as this, and not always as close as this one is to home; we came from Lichfield together, and from Basingstoke, and we spent a lot of time sitting in the car. And Diana is a fund of interesting comments on what's going on around, and I think you all know that because you've probably picked up on it a little bit, so we thought it would be good to try and formally capture some of that by asking Diana specific questions and getting an answer that she can elaborate on as much as she wants, and let us feel some of the experiences she's had during her time with the Jane Austen world and the Jane Austen family. So – I'll hand over to Marilyn, and here we go.

MARILYN JOICE The Jane Austen Society is very fortunate to have so many Austen descendants who have worked, and still do work, very hard for the Society and for the dissemination of knowledge about Jane Austen: to name but a few, Richard Knight, Patrick Stokes, Alwyn Austen, Francis Austen, Richard Jenkyns and, of course, Diana Shervington. At various AGM meetings and conferences, I've been fortunate enough to find myself sitting next to Diana, highly entertained by her humour, her sunny nature, and some fascinating anecdotes, and it's from these moments that the idea of this conversation actually arose. In sharing some of them with my Northern Branch Committee, it was felt that these memories really should be recorded, and I passed this suggestion on to Maggie Lane, and she came up with 'A Conversation with Diana Shervington', and I'm honoured – I'm nervous, but I'm honoured – to be the one who's been asked to do this.

Before we begin, however, I want to tell you a little bit about Diana. Obviously we're going to hear about her as an Austen descendant, but I think in our enthusiasm to learn more things Austen, we're in danger of forgetting that the family all have lives outside the roles they choose to play in the world of Jane Austen, and Diana's life outside that world is full and rich. She was born in 1919, on 10 January, the fourth child of Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Austen Bradford and Margaret Louisa Hardy. She married Rupert Shervington in 1941, and they had three children, Evelyn Arthur, Diana Clare and Caroline Faith. During the war, Diana was in the WAAF, in Intelligence, and she tells me she loved her work, and found it extremely exciting, but she wasn't allowed to tell anyone where she worked. She also worked in Whitehall interpreting aerial photographs.

Diana worked as well as a studio potter, something she loved doing, especially

taking part in exhibitions, and getting commissions for weddings and the like. She also kept bees, with a lot of beehives, and tells me she was a very successful beekeeper, which I imagine worked well with her enthusiasm for gardening, all of which allowed her to work from home to be available for her children.

But now, let's hear more about Diana's Austen heritage and her work for the Society. So, Diana, could you begin by explaining your Austen descent, please.

DIANA SHERVINGTON It took me, as a child, an awful long time to work it out because both of my grandmothers were grand-daughters of Jane's brother Edward, and both my grandmothers and my father were all married from Chawton, from the Great House, at Chawton Church. My father is buried there, and has a pew there, so I feel very much an affinity for Chawton. Also, my mother was chief bridesmaid to Aunt Dorothy and my Uncle Monty, and when Uncle Monty died, Aunt Flo went to the Dower House and we looked after her until she died – my family – so I spent a lot of time there at the Dower House. And when the young Edward inherited, he said: 'I'm sick and tired of Jane Austen. I don't want to hear another word about Jane Austen.' So, of course, all the things that had been lying about the house all came down to the Dower House, and when Aunt Flo died (I was 16 at the time) I came from school for the funeral, and then I stayed at the house, helping everybody, helping my mother clear out the house.



And there were all these wonderful things that Jane had actually worn, and play-things, and she was a very good musician and she liked playing every morning before breakfast. Of course, at the age of 16 I wasn't very interested in this pile of leather-bound books, but on one or two of them she'd actually done 'doodles' all around the outside, and I knew I should want to have a look. And I persuaded my

mother that they would be wonderful for the museum that was just being started, and the various other things that I was able to persuade her to give. But, of course, being the youngest of four, I myself wouldn't inherit anything very much – just little things that were Jane's, little things that she played with, little things that she wore, and so on – but I have been very fortunate in having these lovely things which I'm able to show to people, and some of which I've lent on loan to the museum in Lyme Regis. So I've enjoyed years and years of exciting people whom I've met because of that.

MFJ        Thank you Diana. Diana's actually pre-empted one or two of my questions. [Laughter] Can you remember when you first became aware of what it meant to be a descendant of the Austen family?

DS        It was when we were clearing out the house, that I suddenly began to realise that I too was a descendant, and I'm very proud of the fact that I am.

MFJ        I'm sure you are. I understand that. Where were you raised?

DS        My father found the Great War very, very wearing, and so did my mother. I was born just after the war, and all four of us in different countries I might say, him being a soldier, and I was the one who was born in Ireland while he was trying to curb the troubles in Ireland. Fortunately, the very next year he retired and he wanted to get right away from anything like that, and so he bought a lovely little farm on the Isle of Man and we lived there for six lovely years. It was such a wonderful place to start off, and I've written a little poem which I think might amuse you:

### The Mermaid

Near the dawning of my being  
At the age of four or five  
On a shaft of light, an amazing sight:  
Sitting there on my special rock,  
From which I daily watched the tidal stream,  
Was a gorgeous mermaid, fresh from the sea;  
A-combing of her hair was she  
While singing a plaintive air, so fair.  
I flew to her, but she was unaware.  
And from this furtive rock, I'd often watched and caught a child,  
And even seen a stranded salmon there,  
But I'd never seen a mermaid thereabout.  
'Upon my glistening rock,' said she.  
As a child, I thought this perfectly natural,  
And now, perhaps, celestial.

[Applause]

MFJ That's wonderful. Thank you. You mentioned the Dower House at Chawton, and the next question was going to be, were the places that have become so important to Austen devotees known to you either as 'home', or home of another family or great friends, and could you tell us something about being there?

DS Well, funnily enough, Edward sold the real Dower House, and so the house on the opposite side of the lane turned into what is now 'the Dower House', so I've always said that we all stayed in the 'proper' Dower House, which is now a private house again, I'm glad to say; and they have a great garden, and lots of people used to come and stay, and it was a lovely place to be. And we were within ten minutes' walk of the Great House, so we were often there all the time.

MFJ I was actually going to ask you next about the music books, as that was one of the first stories you ever told me, and it fascinated me – the process by which you realised what you had on that piano.

DS Well, later on I was hoping to do quite a bit of research on those music books, and one of them particularly was one that everyone had contributed to buy, and everyone who had contributed to buy that book, their name was in the back – two whole pages of contributors. Looking through that list, because one was really used quite a lot, I found that the King's organist had bought two copies, and that other famous organists had bought copies. And not only that, but I found that she [Jane Austen] was using some of the names from that book – places and names in her novels – all from that book. And that was one of the happy things that she was able to use, because she always maintained that she didn't use the names of any of her neighbours.

MFJ It was probably wise of her not to do that! I remember at one AGM, and again at the Lyme Regis conference, when you shared with us some of your Austen artefacts. I particularly remember a rather beautiful cockade.

DS That was absolutely marvellous. It was a lovely pink cockade made from feathers, and it was after the Battle of the Nile which was a decisive battle because Nelson captured or destroyed almost the entire French Navy there, and I sometimes lecture on that battle. It was a very exciting one and there's a wonderful song about it too. But the funny thing about it was – I was very young at the time – but I'd just bought a lovely green pillbox hat, and I popped this pink hat on the back of this – and it was very much admired. But then suddenly, of course, I realised that if I left it on that hat, it would deteriorate. So I took it off and had it put on something, so I couldn't do anything so silly! [Laughter]

MFJ Have you any memories of people who knew any of the closer family – nephews and nieces and so on?

DS Well – I very fortunately know most of my cousins, who had all been

descended from the other brothers and sisters. But really I met through the years such interesting people when we had our lunches before the AGM, when all the Committee had lunch with the President and the speaker. You get a very good feeling, and you meet people of marvellous mind, and I think my favourite of all was Lord David Cecil. He was absolutely delightful. He was our President for quite some years, and almost everything he said was delightfully funny, and he kept us all in fits! And I would make the suggestion that we start again having a lunch, because at least it gives the Committee, who work jolly hard for us during the year, a chance to meet interesting people.

MFJ I wonder if any of your contacts actually knew Jane or any of her siblings – if you’ve any memories of people who had stories they had passed down?

DS I do remember my mother was very fond of Sackree, their darling nanny, and she remembered Jane as always being funny, and usually mischievous. There’s a lovely story that [Mary Russell Mitford’s] mother lived quite close to Steventon, and she said that she’d met Jane Austen, who was the prettiest butterfly she’d ever met.

MFJ I wonder if you’ve any anecdotes about Jane and her family to share?

DS When she used to stay at Godmersham, she would always bring paper and pencil with her, and she used to take the elder children through after lunch in the afternoon and shut the door, and there were always gales of laughter for all the funny things that she was amusing them with, and they all had a lovely time when she was playing with them.

MFJ I know that you served on the Committee of the Society for many years. When did you join the Society?

DS I joined it right away at the very beginning, but not on the Committee because I had my youngest daughter in 1954, so I was rather occupied with her, and apart from the other two who were a bit older, but I went to all the meetings at the very beginning. I happened to live in the house next door to Dorothy and Beatrix Darnell, and they were such a clever pair. Beatrix was the Lady Almoner for the Royal College of Music, and she knew Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten, and all the young composers of the time. Dorothy was a well-known portrait painter, and she insisted on doing a portrait of me, and it sat in a cupboard for years because I thought it made me look years older. Nowadays, of course, it’s very much on display! [Laughter]

MFJ Could you share with us your memories of some of the other key figures you came across in the Society in those early days?

DS The Duke of Wellington was great fun. He was our President for quite



some years, and he was a very good president – and he was very amusing. My husband had a wonderful letter from his grandfather (I think); they had a ‘stop’ on the railway where trains would stop if the Duke of Wellington asked them, and this letter asked them to stop a second time for a carriage for us and – what are they called? – where the horses could be? The horses are just behind them. I think that’s quite interesting.

MFJ Tell us about some of the interesting people you’ve met over the years either in the Society, or through the Society, or through your work with Jane Austen. You’ve already told us quite a few.

DS Yes – I think I’ve told you quite a few. I’m trying to think of any others. I definitely think that we’ve been lucky enough to have all of the very best people coming to speak to us, and it’s a wonderful thing, and especially in such a lovely setting as the Great House at Chawton.

MFJ Which of the Society’s achievements made during the time you were working on the Committee gives you the greatest sense of pride?

DS Well, I think we’ve done a tremendous lot for literature, to be quite honest, with our *Reports* which are outstanding now, and getting better and better. Oh – I forgot to talk about Elizabeth Jenkins, because she was an historical novelist, and wrote a wonderful book on Jane Austen; and she was an enormous help to the Society, and such a clever person, and she had such a wonderful memory, and was awfully good at getting things out from different relations, and getting them somehow into museums!

MFJ The ideal person to have working with you. You now live in Lyme Regis. What took you there? Was it anything to do with Jane’s connection?

DS Well, yes – one of the reasons, I think, because she had stayed there for three or four months at a time in 1803 and 1804, and probably more than that too. That was one of the reasons. The other reason was that I was still potting and there’s very good clay down in the West Country and adjacent areas, and materials for making pottery, as I was still working – and so was Rupert – as an artist. So that was the reason we came down, and I’ve been very involved with the museum and helped them quite a bit I think by loaning them the things I had – especially the spillikins. We used to love playing with those spillikins when we were young, and the cup and ball was her [Jane’s] favourite thing. You know how writers get writers’ block sometimes and, when she got writers’ block, she resorted to her cup and ball and she could do it – she was very clever, getting it fixed on the top, and she could do that for sometimes half an hour, or 20 minutes or something. And then the ideas would flow – it was remarkable – and she definitely found that cup and ball very therapeutic and helpful.

MFJ And did you play with it?

DS Yes – definitely. We all used to play with that particular one, because in those days each member of the family had one, and you could all play.

MFJ You’ve been a prime mover in the development of the Jane Austen Garden in Lyme Regis. Would you like to tell us something about it?

DS Well, yes. Jane used to walk up the hill – it wasn’t the Marine Parade when she was alive – and up Stour Lane, where I happened to live, and down to Wimpole Cottage, where a friend of hers lived; and she was to do this regularly. Unfortunately, this cottage – I’ve known two people who remember Wimpole Cottage being still OK – unfortunately during the war they put great rolls of wire-netting to stop anybody getting into the sea, so they couldn’t earn a living being a Bed and Breakfast any longer, and eventually they abandoned it. And I remember having a delightful lady who did some cleaning for me, and she remembered, as a child, running in and out of the house because all the doors were open. And it’s on the piece of ground that was Wimpole Cottage that the Jane Austen Garden has been built, and the Jane Austen Society is partly responsible for it.

I remember being there when Sir Hugh Smiley opened that garden quite well. And of course Sir Hugh Smiley and Lady Smiley were tremendously interesting when the Committee used to go to their house for the Committee meetings. Nancy Smiley was the sister of Cecil Beaton, the famous photographer, and she was always exquisitely dressed, and some of her dresses are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. They were tremendously interesting people, and Sir Hugh did all the cooking while she entertained us. [Laughter] And so we had a special lunch, and then we had our Committee meeting after that, but Nancy was extremely well read – she’d read all the latest things.

And that was just like Jane – Jane was very up-to-date, and with her music books particularly. She wrote out all the latest hits from both Paris and London, which is very, very interesting. For instance, the polka dance – she’d written out about six or seven polka dances, and that was because, at Court, George III forbade the polka being danced because of showing too much of the lady’s legs – and so of course it immediately became enormously popular. [Laughter]

MFJ I wonder, Diana, if during the time you’ve been living in Lyme you’ve noticed a greater public awareness of Jane Austen’s connections?

DS Yes – I think there are an enormous lot of people who come specially, and I do wish the Town Council would bring us their plans; they don’t seem to take very much notice of us. But, in actual fact, an enormous lot of people come, either by coach or come and stay, and go down to the Cobb – usually to the wrong steps! But nevertheless I do think the Museum here does bring it out very much. For instance, I give two or three different lectures during the year. This year, I’ve lectured on ‘Why didn’t she marry?’ and I’m also lecturing on the battles – ‘Jane

and the Navy'. And sometimes I get asked just suddenly; a fortnight before this last Valentine's Day, the curator, Mary, rang me up and said, 'Diana, we've decided to have a party on Valentine's Day. Will you do something amusing?' [Laughter] It took me a week to write it, but it got a great reception and I've no doubt I shall have something else turning up like that.

MFJ Lyme Regis must be one of the few places that hasn't jumped on the Jane Austen bandwagon! I'm going to ask one final question, Diana, and are you then open to questions from the floor? The last question I want to ask is – and I hope it's not controversial – 'Do you like the works of your illustrious ancestor?' [Laughter]

DS Yes, of course I love it.

MFJ Do you have a favourite?

DS Yes – *Persuasion*.

MFJ Ladies and gentlemen – the wonderful Diana Shervington!

[Applause]

PATRICK STOKES Thank you very much, Diana and Marilyn. I'm going to do the vote of thanks. What I always enjoy with Diana is that, every time you listen to her, you learn something new. But one thing that didn't come out today because it's the sort of thing that happens when you're going by in a car, but I think it's a funny story. In this part of the country, you have these daisies – they're red and white daisies which look like small daisies on the lawn but they grow in bushes and you may have seen them around – and one day we were driving into Diana's house along the driveway through all these walls where this stuff grows in profusion, and Diana said to me, 'The seeds for those daisies came over in the nose-bags of the Roman legions'! Well – who else would know that? Anyway, thank you very much for that – delightful entertainment. Thank you again.

MFJ Do we have any questions for Diana?

Q1 Did you know your grandmothers at all?

DS I knew one of them. Louisa Harding – my mother's mother. She lived in the most lovely old house at Chilworth Manor, which had been a monastery, and we used to go to stay there a lot. She remembered Jane, but only just. She said that everything she did was funny, and she just loved it when she came to stay.

*Diana Shervington, a Vice-President of the Jane Austen Society, is Patron of the South West Branch; Marilyn Joice chairs the Society's Education Subcommittee and is also Chairman of the Northern Branch.*

# *Jane Austen and the importance of aunts*

Farnell Parsons

When Caroline Austen (1805-1880) became an aunt, Jane Austen sent her congratulations, saying ‘Now that you are become an Aunt, you are a person of some consequence & must excite great Interest whatever You do. I have always maintained the importance of Aunts as much as possible, & I am sure of your doing the same now.’ This meaningful message to a ten-year-old sister-aunt, newly displaced as the youngest in her family circle, made Caroline feel grown-up and and demonstrated Jane Austen’s innate sensitivity in reaching out to her niece. She didn’t mention that the birth of Anna Lefroy’s child had made her, at thirty-nine, a great-aunt for the first time. As an aunt in a typically large family, Jane Austen gained status when four brothers produced 24 nephews and nieces in her lifetime. She was eighteen when she became aunt to Fanny Knight and, soon after, to Anna Austen, Caroline’s half sister. Her brothers ultimately produced 33 offspring, a remarkable number surviving to adulthood.

Because mothers frequently died young, often during pregnancy or shortly after parturition, Jane and Cassandra helped care for young relatives, making them close confidantes until, and often after, a step-mother took over. Edward Knight, who could afford servants, never remarried, and his eldest daughter, Fanny, became more like a sister to them. Two-year old Anna Austen lived at Steventon for almost two years after her mother’s death until her father’s remarriage. James, Francis and Charles chose new wives from amongst their circle, producing second families: Mary and Martha Lloyd, close friends of the Austen family, became sisters-in-law, while Charles married his first wife’s sister, Harriet Palmer. Henry remarried after Eliza’s death, neither union producing progeny.

Jane Austen’s letters show how she was troubled by women’s constant motherhood. She bemoaned Anna Lefroy’s loss of identity when early marriage and frequent births ended her writing, saying ‘She will be worn out by the time she’s thirty.’ After Ben Lefroy’s death in 1829, Cassandra wrote, ‘She is left, poor thing! with a large family, a narrow income & indifferent health.’ Aunt Jane counselled a young Fanny Knight regarding several possible suitors, saying ‘Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without Affection.’ After her aunt’s death, Fanny, at twenty-seven, married a widower, Sir Edward Knatchbull, to become his third wife, step-mother to six and produced nine children of her own. Meanwhile the Revd Edward Cooper’s family increased so often that cousin Jane was unable or unwilling to recollect the exact number.

Quite possibly single by choice, Jane Austen settled happily into the role of aunt which allowed loving access to young relatives – motherhood once removed. Her sister had retreated into spinsterhood after the death of her fiancé, Tom Fowle, in 1797, and because she and Cassandra were soul mates, Jane stayed within the family circle. A marriage, even of a close friend or relative, often engendered a

different, less warm connection, as was evident in Jane's ruptured relationship with Mary Lloyd after she became a sister-in-law. Jane was partisan where the Austen family was concerned and said of her brother Charles's daughter Cassy, 'I wish she were not so very Palmery – but it seems stronger than ever. – I never knew a Wife's family-features to have such undue influence.'

While Jane Austen's novels end with supposedly happy alliances, each person united with the partner they deserve, her depiction of their family life is less idyllic. The young Charles Musgroves in *Persuasion* and the Middletons and Palmers in *Sense and Sensibility* share little but a tendency to bicker; even the better suited John Knightleys incline to disagree, each tending to resemble the timorous Mr Woodhouse. Of the few united couples, the Gardiners in *Pride and Prejudice* and the Harvilles in *Persuasion* are lovingly involved with their children. Probably the happiest are the childless Admiral and Mrs Croft, who retain a great fondness for each other, very similar to Jane's aunt and uncle the Leigh Perrots.

There were relatively few close aunts in the Austen family, Philadelphia Hancock and Jane Leigh Perrot being prominent. Mrs Hancock died in 1792 when Jane Austen was sixteen and knowledge of the maverick aunt's early life was gained from family legend and her daughter, Eliza de Feuillide, the self-styled 'outlandish cousin' and eventual sister-in-law. Only Mrs Leigh Perrot, rich, autocratic and childless, continued as a constant aggravating force in the Austen family's life. Publicly well-mannered and polite to her elders, Jane Austen's writing allowed her to create aunts and surrogate aunts whom she could treat less deferentially.

In the *Juvenilia* which Chapman says was written c.1787-93 when Jane Austen was between twelve and eighteen, there is a reference in *Catherine or The Bower* to a young woman sent by her impoverished family to find a husband in India which presumably echoed but did not faithfully represent Aunt Philadelphia's marital adventure. In *Letter the third From A young Lady in distress'd Circumstances*, Lady Greville, taking the young Maria Williams to a ball, torments her impoverished state, asking her 'was not your Father as poor as a Rat' and whether he had been in debtor's prison. This family friend cruelly criticises her every aspect, much as Jane Austen may have been subject to Aunt Leigh Perrot's strictures. The young girl writes, 'Such is the humiliating Situation in which I am forced to appear while riding in her Ladyship's Coach – I dare not be impertinent, as my Mother is always admonishing me to be humble & patient if I wish to make my way in the world.' Lady Greville's character was further developed in *First Impressions* begun in 1796, when Jane Austen was twenty, where Lady Catherine de Bourgh is critical of Elizabeth Bennet's family and compares her unfavourably with her own daughter.

Claire Tomalin writes that *Lady Susan* is sometimes associated with Eliza de Feuillide, a flirtatious young widow who was very much a part of the Austen family. Lady Susan is definitely flirtatious, the sort of woman Clive would have warned his wife against as he did regarding Philadelphia – the subject of gossip, envy and dislike. Lady Susan's brother-in-law, Charles Vernon, lives at Churchill, connecting the work to the Hancocks, since Warren Hastings (1732-1818) was born

in Churchill, Oxfordshire, after his impoverished family lost nearby Daylesford. Lady Susan resembles Eliza's mother, headstrong and determined, who risked a great deal by going to India to find a husband. Her aim, like Lady Susan's, was to secure her daughter's marriage and she took Eliza to France to be schooled for a desirable match. She was aided by the questionable chevalier Sir John Lambert, the resident English banker in Paris, skilled in brokering profitable alliances; according to Paula Byrne, 'he was notorious for combining the cordiality of the English character with the stylishness of the French.' In *Perdita: The life of Mary Robinson*, Byrne reveals the demi-monde Parisian world of 1781 where young Eliza was handed over to the so-called Comte de Feuillide; she was not able to choose or refuse a suitor but dutifully acquiesced to her mother and Lambert. Mary Robinson (1758?-1800), known as *Perdita* for her role in *The Winter's Tale*, was a flamboyant celebrity, mistress of the Prince of Wales (the future George IV) and Charles James Fox, among others; an actress, acknowledged writer and feminist thinker, her beauty was recorded in portraits by Romney, Gainsborough, Reynolds and Hoppner. Her first book, *Vencenza or The Dangers of Credulity* (1792) a Gothic romance in the style of Ann Radcliffe, became a literary sensation, sold out in a day and quickly went through five editions. Robinson's serious writing brought the attention of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Godwin, and a portrait of her by Hoppner hangs in the hall of Chawton House Library. When Mary visited Paris for several months in 1781, Sir John Lambert found her an apartment, a rented carriage, and a box at the opera; parties were held in her honour. She was introduced to leading men of fashion including Philippe, Duke of Chartres, the future Duke of Orleans and a cousin of King Louis XVI. Reputedly the richest man in Europe, a politician, an Anglophile and a rake said to have a harem of concubines, the Duke pursued Mary, who resisted the dissolute suitor. It was in this *milieu* that Philadelphia Hancock bargained for what she thought an appropriate marriage for her daughter. There is a reference to a Mary Robinson in a Jane Austen letter to Cassandra from Rowling on 1 September 1796: 'I have heard nothing of Mary Robinson since I have been [here]. I expect to be well scolded for daring to doubt, whenever the subject is mentioned.' Another letter from Rowling on 18 September 1796 reads: 'Mary is brought to bed of a Boy; both doing very well. I shall leave you to guess what Mary, I mean.' Rowling in Kent was close to Denton Court, the home of Samuel Egerton Brydges (1762-1837), near his birthplace, Wootton. His first wife, Elizabeth Byrche, by whom he had two sons and three daughters, died in 1796 and he married a Mary Robinson in 1797. She bore him ten children. It is possible that their relationship preceded his first wife's death – hence the veiled mention.

The influential aunts in what became *Pride and Prejudice*, Mrs Gardiner and Lady Catherine de Bourgh, are polar opposites. Mrs Gardiner is described as 'an amiable, intelligent, elegant woman', particularly close to Jane and Elizabeth, while their mother is depicted as 'of mean understanding, little information and uncertain temper'. Aunt Gardiner may well have been based on Madam Lefroy, to whom Jane Austen was strongly attached; younger by ten years and less harried

than Mrs Austen, who ran a very busy household, she provided stimulating respite for an intelligent young girl similar to the fictional Aunt Gardiner, who nurtures Elizabeth with loving, objective guidance which neither of her parents is able or willing to provide. Elizabeth Bennet is prejudiced against Lady Catherine by Mr Collins's sycophantic adulation of his patroness, assessing her as an 'arrogant, conceited woman', and Wickham agrees, describing her manners as dictatorial and insolent. Her prior judgment is confirmed at Rosings where, as a guest, Elizabeth replies succinctly but politely to Lady Catherine's hostile interrogation. Darcy, however, is as discomforted by his aunt's behaviour as Elizabeth was by her mother's rudeness to him. When the imperious *grande dame* invades the Bennet household her insolence provokes Elizabeth to respond in a more forthright fashion than most genteel young women would be allowed. Jane Austen's depiction of Lady Catherine must have struck a chord with members of a family all too familiar with Mrs Leigh Perrot's powerful criticisms.

The aunts in the novels are usually rich or loving, seldom both. An exception is Emma Woodhouse, a fledgling Lady Catherine, mistress of Hartfield, described by the author as 'handsome, clever and rich', 'having too much of her own way' and disposed 'to think too well of herself'; she is also a snob, only grudgingly tolerating social intercourse with those below her. She dotes on her five nieces and nephews, however, having sole care of the two older boys, Henry and John, when they stay at Hartfield. She claims she has no need of marriage because she does not want a fortune, employment or consequences – whatever they may be. 'And as for objects of interest, objects for the affections . . . I shall be very well off, with all the children of a sister I love so much, to care about . . . My nephews and nieces! – I shall often have a niece with me.' She is also loving, patient and kind to a difficult and demanding father, initially refusing Mr Knightley's offer of marriage so she might stay at home to care for him. In her love of family, she can be compared with the lowly Miss Bates, whose abiding interest is the welfare of her mother and niece.

Jane Austen describes Miss Bates as truly happy in her limited life, 'a woman whom no one named without good-will. It was her own universal good-will and contented temper which works such wonders. She loved every body, was interested in every body's merits.' There is no greater testament to Miss Bates's character than the niece she helped raise; as a poor relative, however, she has no way of advancing Jane's future. When the engagement to Frank Churchill is revealed she is delighted, although it signals an end to a close relationship with her niece. Jane Fairfax sees her aunt's necessarily frugal life, dependent upon others for a few luxuries, and is keenly aware of her own dismal future. Regardless of how she feels about the feckless Frank Churchill, she has little choice but to marry him to avoid becoming a governess, a station equated with slavery; conditions became so dire that The Governesses Benevolent Institution was founded in London in 1841 to assist them during illness, poverty and old age: renamed the Schoolmistresses and Governesses Institution in 1952, it was still in existence in 2004.

The much maligned but invisible rich aunt Mrs Churchill is described as

‘a capricious – impulsive – unpredictable woman who governed her husband entirely’. Highbury learns of her only through Mr Weston’s constant criticisms, which excuse the behaviour of his son. Others voice doubts, before and after Mrs Churchill’s death, with chapter XVIII devoted to the differing views of Emma and Mr Knightley regarding Frank’s character; their dialogue reveals Jane Austen’s sophisticated skill in depicting earnest and deep-felt differences between a man and a woman, good friends who can disagree. At her death ‘Mrs. Churchill, after being disliked at least twenty-five years, was now spoken of with compassionate allowances. In one point she was fully justified. She had never been admitted before to be seriously ill. The event acquitted her of all the fancifulness and all the selfishness of imaginary complaints.’

Lady Russell, wealthy godmother and surrogate aunt in *Persuasion*, is important in Anne Elliot’s limited world. The author describes her as ‘a benevolent, charitable, good woman,’ with ‘value for rank and consequence, which blinded her a little to the faults of those who possessed them.’ As a rich and loving mother substitute, her snobbish opposition to Wentworth results in Anne’s becoming, at twenty-seven, a maiden aunt. Almost invisible and ignored until required to care for her sister Mary’s boys, she echoes Emma Woodhouse, regarding the children as an ‘object of interest, amusement, and wholesome exertion.’ Mr Elliot is regarded as a most suitable connection whereby Anne will ultimately become Lady Elliot, mistress of Kellynch. Denying she is a match-maker, Lady Russell, still persuasive, says her delight would be to see Anne assuming her mother’s role; arguing for rather than against a suitor, her bias is strong but does not affect Anne’s sober judgment. Jane Austen deals kindly with Lady Russell’s mistaken values and is sympathetic to her errors; when Anne and Wentworth are finally united, Lady Russell admits to being completely wrongheaded in her prime concern, which is Anne’s happiness.

None of the three aunts in *Mansfield Park* can be considered loving and only one is rich. They are characterised as a slattern (Mrs Price), a sloth (Lady Bertram) and a shrew (Mrs Norris). Neither mother has any real interest in her offspring, abdicating responsibility to a childless sister who inimically observes Sir Thomas’s charge that Fanny Price be reminded she is not an equal; Sir Thomas thinks it a point of ‘great delicacy’ but ‘delicacy’ is not part of Mrs Norris’s vocabulary. *Mansfield Park* is a Cinderella story with Mrs Norris resembling the wicked stepmother, promoting the Bertram sisters and belittling Fanny who, as heroine, seems impervious to her aunt’s unrelenting cruelty. Aunt Norris’s power increases in Sir Thomas’s absence and is mitigated only when he returns to a chaotic family situation. Recognising Fanny’s virtue and blossoming womanhood, he gives a ball in her honour, symbolising both his regard and her inclusion in the family. Characteristically claiming her part in Fanny’s elevation, Aunt Norris comments, ‘What would she have been if we had not taken her by the hand?’ Ironically, she is speaking the truth. Fanny becomes stronger through adversity so when asked to accept the flawed Henry Crawford, she refuses. Like Lady Russell, who urges Anne’s marriage to Mr Elliot for wealth and position, Sir Thomas thinks of Fanny’s future; he knows ‘there certainly are not so many men of large fortune in the world,



as there are pretty women to deserve them'. Fanny's obdurate refusal threatens their relationship until she finally becomes 'the daughter that he wanted'.

Merryn Williams in *Women in the English Novel, 1800-1900* writes that Jane Austen's society judged each woman by whether she married and then, whether she married 'well'. Well, presumably, meant a rich husband, preferably with a title (which Mrs Hancock sought for Eliza), rather than a compatible, loving partner. Jane Austen has Charlotte Lucas, twenty-seven, eager for her own home, capturing the insufferable Mr Collins and appalling her friend Elizabeth Bennet, who has the luxury of rejecting two suitors. Anne Elliot, also twenty-seven, and a younger Fanny Price are unwilling to settle, holding out for loving marriages even while dependent on the marginal support of unsympathetic families. Jane Austen's malicious aunts add drama to her plots but have little influence over the requisite happy resolutions. Twenty-first century romantics persist in believing that Jane Austen could and should have married, perhaps ignorant of her letters, which reveal a full and satisfying single life. Williams says it is significant that the other four great English women novelists (the three Brontë sisters and George Eliot) were childless. Charlotte Brontë, surviving her sisters Anne and Emily, married at thirty-eight and died during pregnancy less than a year later; George Eliot had a sustained relationship with George Henry Lewes, and one biographer writes that her royalties went towards the support of Lewes's own family and Mrs Lewes's four illegitimate children.

Jane Austen regarded her novels as her children, their gestation often proving difficult, and wrote to Cassandra, 'I often wonder how *you* can find time for what you do, in addition to the care of the House. And how good Mrs. West could have written such Books & collected so many hard words, with all her family cares, is still more a matter of astonishment! Composition seems to me impossible with a head full of Joints of Mutton & doses of rhubarb.' Jane West (1758-1852), a mother of three sons, was an English novelist, poet, playwright and writer of conduct literature and educational tracts, published under the names of 'Prudentia Homespun' and Mrs West; she too complained 'My needle always claims the pre-eminence of my pen'. Jane Austen's single status, however domestically frustrating, allowed her to write novels and continue her intimate involvement in the lives of her nieces and nephews. She wrote at length to James Edward Austen on her last birthday and again on 27 May, 1817. In her few remaining months she wrote to all the closest young relatives: three letters to Fanny Knight, four to Caroline Austen and a note to Anna Lefroy, while Cassandra Esten Austen (Cassy) received an amusing mirror-image letter. Despite declining health, each reply to their letters was cheerful and perfectly attuned to the correspondents' age, accomplishments and interests. To the end, Jane Austen maintained the importance of being an aunt.

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## *Anne Austen of Ferring and the age of scientific discovery*

Janet Clarke

Jane Austen's second cousin Anne Austen (1799-1864) is a noted figure in the history of early photography. She was the only daughter of Major John Austen and his wife Harriet (née Hussey) of Goudhurst, Kent and granddaughter of Francis Austen, the lawyer of Sevenoaks, and his second wife, Jane Leonard. It is not clear how well Jane Austen knew her young cousin, but had the novelist's life been prolonged, she would no doubt have taken an interest in the eminent scientific circles in which Anne was destined to move.

In 1811, on the death of her mother, and with her father being stationed in Portugal with the army, Anne Austen went to live under the kindly care of her parents' close friend and distant relative John George Children, the distinguished scientist of Ferox Hall, Tonbridge.



*John George Children  
by Benjamin Rawlinson Faulkner, 1826*

This arrangement proved ideal, for Anne provided a welcome and compatible companion for Children's own motherless daughter, Anna, who happened also to be the same age as her new friend. The girls soon became more like sisters, remaining so for the rest of their lives. Anna Children, having lost her own mother at a tender age, had developed a particularly close bond with her father, whose love of science she too came to share. Anna, and later Anne herself, became absorbed in the study of botany, a subject which would see their names forever linked in the history of science.



*Ferox Hall c1870*

*by kind permission of the Tonbridge Historical Society*

In their article 'Jane Austen's Family in the Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone', Mark Ballard and Alison Cresswell inform us that John George Children (1777-1852), Anne Austen's 'guardian', was known to Jane Austen.<sup>1</sup> They were in fact third cousins, through the Weller branch of their family tree; Jane Austen's paternal great-grandmother, the remarkable Elizabeth Weller of Tonbridge, was the sister of John George's great-grandfather, Robert Weller. The Weller connection thus made Anna Children the third cousin once removed of both Anne and Jane Austen.

Educated at Tonbridge, Eton and Cambridge, John George Children, 'a man of exceptional intelligence',<sup>2</sup> developed a lifelong interest in science, especially in the fields of electricity, mineralogy, and biology. The mineral 'Childrenite' was named in his honour, as was the Australian snake 'Children's python' (*Antaresia childreni*). Aged 30, John George was elected Fellow of the Royal Society and was later appointed Secretary. He built his own large, well-equipped laboratory in the grounds of Ferox Hall, attracting the foremost scientists of the day, a number of whom became the Childrens' close family friends. They included:

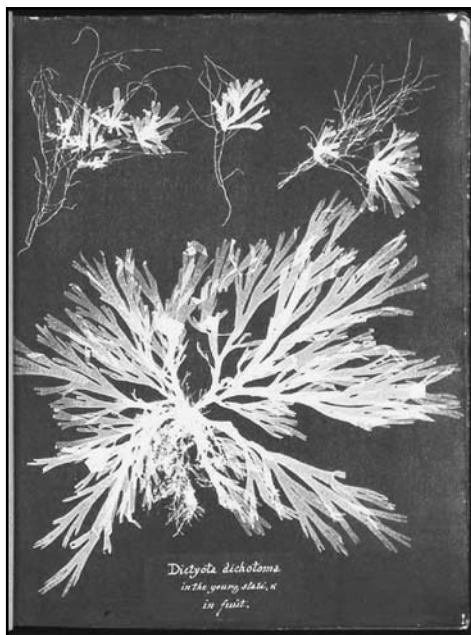
1. Sir Humphry Davy (1778-1829), chemist and doctor of medicine, who discovered Sodium and Potassium and invented the 'miners' safety lamp'. He was president of the Royal Society.
2. Sir John Frederick William Herschel (1792-1871), astronomer, who invented sensitised paper and the use of hyposulphite of soda for fixing in photography. In 1842 he invented the cyanotype (or 'blueprint') process, a breakthrough in early photography.
3. William Fox Talbot (1800-1877), inventor, who worked in mathematics,

optics, and chemical changes in colour. He discovered the calotype process on which modern photography is built, for which he received the medal of the Royal Society in 1842.<sup>3</sup>

On one occasion alone in 1813, as many as 38 leading English chemists were accommodated overnight at Ferox Hall, in order to investigate the properties of J G Children's giant battery. Such illustrious gatherings must have made a lasting impression on the two young girls, no doubt inspiring them in their own botanical studies.

In 1816, the normally happy Children household was shaken by a severe financial crisis, when John George Children fell victim to the sudden collapse of the Bank of Tonbridge. Forced to sell Ferox Hall, the family moved to London, where John George took employment as assistant librarian in the Department of Antiquities at the British Museum. Through the years, Anna Children's interest in botany deepened, and she became a skilled illustrator, producing over 200 drawings for her father's 1823 translation of Jean Lamarck's *Genera of Shells*. In 1825 Anna married John Pelly Atkins, a promoter of pneumatic railways, and later Sheriff of Kent. The couple, who were to remain childless, lived at Halstead Place, Sevenoaks.

Anna Atkins's dedication to botany was later recognised when she was made a member of the Botanical Society of London, one of the few scientific bodies at that time to admit women. She was, however, on account of her sex, prohibited from speaking at meetings! Through her friendship with William Fox Talbot, Anna became interested in the emerging field of photography and importantly undertook its first serious application to science. Using her friend Sir John Herschel's cyanotype (or 'blueprint') process, she coated paper with a light-sensitive solution, onto which she placed a specimen of algae, topped it with glass and left it exposed to sunlight; a negative impression of the algae formed on the paper, which was permanently fixed by rinsing in plain water. The result was a clear white image on a blue background, which proved durable



A photograph of algae, made by Anna Atkins as part of her 1843 book, *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions*, often considered the first book composed entirely of photographic images

and stable. Anna realised its potential for scientific illustration and used cyanotype plates to publish what is often considered to be the first book ever illustrated with photographs;<sup>4</sup> her work, entitled *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions*, incorporated more than 400 photographic plates and was issued in parts between October 1843 and September 1853. About a dozen exist today and can be seen at various museums and galleries, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, where Anna Atkins is considered possibly the first female photographer.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, Anne Austen's life had taken a very different course from her friend's, but perhaps one more in keeping for an Austen, when at the age of 37, she became a clergyman's wife. On Thursday, 9 March 1837, *The Times* newspaper reported Anne's marriage to the Reverend Henry Dixon, vicar of Ferring:

On the 8<sup>th</sup> Inst, at St George's Hanover Square, by the Rev Sir Charles F Farnaby, Bart., chaplain to the Earl of Devon, the Rev. Henry Dixon, the vicar of Ferring, Sussex, to Anne, only daughter of the late Major Austen of Goudhurst, Kent."

Henry Dixon (1798-1870) was the second son of the Revd Joseph Dixon, rector of St Mary's Church, Sullington, a beauty spot 12 miles inland from Worthing in the heart of glorious West Sussex countryside. The Dixons were a highly respected, well-known family of doctors and clergymen, whose name is still revered locally for their services to the community. How Anne and Henry first met is open to speculation, but perhaps Anne was holidaying in the fashionable resort of Worthing. Educated at Eton and Brasenose College Oxford, he was ordained in 1823 and first served as curate to his father at Sullington. In 1832 he was appointed vicar of St Andrew's, the parish church of Ferring; this was a desirable living, Ferring being an historic coastal village only 3 miles from Worthing, home of Henry's brother and mother in later years.



*St Andrew's Church, Ferring, West Sussex*  
*Photograph by Susan Davies*

Since Roman times, Ferring had been a flourishing agricultural community, but by the end of the Napoleonic War in 1815 the village was suffering the hardships of a general economic recession; farmers faced bankruptcy and agricultural

labourers struggled to find work to feed their families. Villagers looked to St Andrew's Church, their source of help and solace in the heart of Ferring for over 1000 years.

St Andrew's rests on an ancient holy site, the earliest record being the Saxon charter of 791, which refers to 'the church of Saint Andrew...situated in the land which is called Ferring'.<sup>6</sup> Following the Norman invasion, the manor of Ferring unusually remained in the ownership of the diocese of Chichester, one of whose bishops was Richard de Wyche (1197-1253), who was well acquainted with Ferring, where it is said he once performed a miracle. Latin inscriptions at Chichester Cathedral describe how 'He always strove to fill the poor with the word of alms; when people came to him at Ferryng from all quarters so that his host, Mr Simon de Ferryng, seeing so many, remarked that there was not enough bread in the house for everyone to have a little, his answer was, "Let all come and the Lord will give." When all were filled and gone, Mr Simon said he had the same number of loaves as before the meal.'<sup>7</sup> Today, Richard de Wyche is better known as St Richard of Chichester, famous for his widely popular prayer.<sup>8</sup>

In 1837, Henry and Anne Dixon moved into their large spacious vicarage, set in glebeland close to St Andrew's. John George Children's *Memoir* informs us that shortly afterwards the newly married couple made a tour of Switzerland and Northern Italy before settling into village life in Ferring.<sup>9</sup> To help with the running of the vicarage, they employed two servants. Nearby, south of the church, stood the manor house, while opposite, forming very much the hub of the village, a row of cottages housed the post office, a butcher's shop, a blacksmith's and a cobbler's. A little further on, a large square house was occupied first by a captain of the artillery and then by a doctor of physic. Ferring at this time spanned 950 acres, with most of its 300 residents dwelling in a scattering of labourers' cottages.



*The former vicarage Ferring, West Sussex  
Photograph by Susan Dawes*



*Cottages opposite St Andrew's Church, Ferring, West Sussex*

Ferring, together with the adjacent parishes of Kingston and East Preston, formed the prebend of Ferring, established in circa 1150 by Bishop Hilary of Chichester, with St Andrew's as the mother church. Following a great storm in the 17th century however, Kingston chapel was lost to the sea, since when the fifty or so parishioners had to attend either Ferring church or St Mary's in East Preston. Henry Dixon conducted services at both churches every Sunday, alternating between one at 11am and the other at 3pm. Additional services were held on special Feast Days, while Holy Communion was celebrated four times a year. Church repairs and refurbishment demanded his constant attention; in particular in 1842 he oversaw major works undertaken to raise St Andrew's chancel and nave ceilings, thereby creating a more spacious interior. Henry's stipend in 1851 was £256. Congregations at Ferring averaged 162 and at East Preston, 150.

A major feature of East Preston at that time was the workhouse, built in 1791 to serve a wide surrounding area. Its inmates accounted for half the village population and half the congregation of St Mary's. Pauper numbers rose steadily throughout the 19th century, necessitating the building of a much larger institution by the end of the 1860s. As chaplain to the workhouse, Henry Dixon was required by the Board of Governors to 'read prayers and preach a sermon to the paupers every Sunday and on Holy Days, to visit the sick, to catechize and examine the children once a month at least and to report on the moral and religious state of the inmates'.<sup>9</sup> Every Sunday, the many paupers filed into St Mary's church, where they sat on very old benches to the west of the font. Interestingly, those who were not members of the Church of England were entitled to see a minister of their own religious denomination.

By 1844, local children attended both day school and Sunday school in East Preston. In 1850, Henry Dixon reported, 'there is a Daily and Sunday School in East Preston, attended by about 15 girls and 13 boys';<sup>10</sup> fees of 3d a week were charged per child, the costs to the poor being defrayed by subscriptions from local gentry.

Anne Dixon, being the vicar's wife, was an important figure in the life of the community. As the vicar of Berwick, East Sussex, wrote at the time, 'A woman of influence was needed in each parish, and the tone of the parish was set by the parson's wife'.<sup>11</sup> Visiting the sick and needy, teaching in Sunday school, charitable work and receiving visitors at the vicarage were all functions of a clergy wife. Anne's chief role however, would have been to support her husband, whose workload was considerable, being Rural Dean as well as vicar of three parishes.

Living in such a delightful rural situation, just a short stroll from the sea, the Dixons, like Ferring residents today, must have rarely lacked visitors. It is even possible that Cassandra Austen and her brothers may have made the trip from neighbouring Hampshire to visit their newly married cousin. Not far from Ferring lived Henry's younger brother, Dr Frederick Dixon MRCS FGS (1799-1849), a highly esteemed local surgeon. Frederick resided with his wife Maria in their home 'Elm Lawn', newly built in the centre of the popular resort of Worthing. Earlier, in 1824, on the death of their father, Henry and Frederick Dixon had inherited

responsibility for the family's successful pill manufacturing business, located in nearby Storrington. The efficacious pill formula had been created by their uncle and former surgeon, Dr George Dixon, as an anti-bilious preparation for his wife; the remedy became so renowned that by the beginning of the 19th century, Dixon's 'pills to cure all ills' were in worldwide demand and said to be sold in every city in the USA. The cost was 5s 9d per box, a half-box 2s 9d, and five boxes-in-one, a guinea each. Regular customers included the Duke of Norfolk, the Dowager Lady Saye and Sele, and Viscountess Bulkeley.

Having concern for the health of the whole community, in 1829 Henry and Frederick helped found the first Worthing Dispensary, established 'for administering medicines and medical advice gratis for the relief of the sick and necessitous poor'.<sup>12</sup> Henry chaired the founders' inaugural meeting and was subsequently made the hospital's first chairman and treasurer; Frederick was appointed consultant surgeon. 'Three doctors each gave an hour of their time free, twice a week, so that the Dispensary could open from 10am to 11am every day except Sunday. The cost of drugs was defrayed by subscription. Those who could afford to do so could recommend someone for care. This cost a guinea a year for six patients.'<sup>13</sup>

In 1844, the two-roomed Dispensary in Ann Street Worthing was closed, being replaced by a larger establishment in Chapel Road, re-named The Worthing Infirmary and Dispensary; this was the forerunner of today's magnificent, multi-million pound Worthing Hospital in Lyndhurst Road. Anne Dixon too must surely have taken a keen interest in the re-organisation and expansion of local health provision overseen by her husband and brother-in-law.

Dr Frederick Dixon was a keen geologist who by 1840 had amassed a rare collection of fossils, and was made Fellow of the Geological Society of London; he was also one of only three British expert palaeontologists, together with Sir Richard Owen (who first coined the term 'dinosaur') and Gideon Mantell. He was so well regarded in scientific circles that Charles Darwin himself took an interest in Frederick's work on Cirripeds (marine crustaceans such as barnacles). In addition to his scientific interests, he was a gifted pianist, noted for hosting musical soirées at Elm Lawn, where famous singers were invited to perform. How Anne and Henry must have enjoyed these delightful occasions; it is possible that they may even have first been introduced at such a gathering, perhaps through their mutual scientific connections



*Elm Lawn, Worthing, West Sussex  
Photograph by Susan Dawes*

Unfortunately, however, these happy times were not to last. In 1849, following



a visit to London, Frederick Dixon contracted cholera and died, causing the people of Worthing to mourn the loss of a much loved surgeon. Frederick's unique collection of 4000 fossils, 'Dixonia', held by the British Museum, and his important work in *Geology of Sussex* have served as a memorial, and provide an enduring legacy to the world of science.

In 1851 Elm Lawn, vacated by Frederick's widow Maria, was let on a 21-year lease to a Jane Cholmeley, interestingly a namesake of Jane Austen's aunt, Mrs Leigh-Perrot, prior to her marriage. This coincidence begs the question, was Anne Dixon with her Austen/Cholmeley connections, instrumental in introducing Jane Cholmeley to this desirable property, where she resided until her death in 1869? To add to the intrigue, in 1859, a Revd Robert Cholmeley, grandson of Montague Cholmeley (1743-1803) of Easton in Lincolnshire, home of Mrs Leigh-Perrot's family, was appointed vicar of St John the Baptist Church, Findon, just outside Worthing. It seems likely that the vicar of Findon and the tenant of Elm Lawn were connected.

1851 proved a memorable year for the whole nation, for on 1 May the country celebrated the opening of Prince Albert's Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. Among the many visitors were Anne and Henry Dixon, who with Anna and John Atkins stayed with John George Children at his home in Torrington Square. Children's *Memoir* records that, 'although not himself deriving any great delight from the Crystal Palace, he was anxious that his guests should thoroughly enjoy it'.

That autumn, Anne and Henry received a return visit from the Atkinses and John George Children, as guests at Ferring vicarage. Anna's father was eager to investigate experiments on the magnetism of the human body, which were taking place at nearby Brighton. The party might have made the journey by train, since the Brighton to Chichester railway line had opened earlier in 1846; the nearest station to Ferring was less than a mile away at Goring. This stay in Sussex proved to be John George Children's final visit to Anne, whom he had long regarded as another daughter; a few months later on New Year's Day 1852, following a short period of illness, he died, leaving Anna bereft.

To comfort her friend, Anne Dixon travelled to Halstead Place where she helped Anna with the difficult task of sorting through her father's effects; she also assisted Anna in the writing of John George Children's *Memoir*. It was, moreover, during this time that Anne Dixon herself became importantly involved in Anna Atkins's pioneering work in photography. With their mutual love of botany and artistic flair, they together created exquisite photograms of ferns, flowers, feathers, and lace. This led to their collaboration on producing three presentation albums of cyanotype photograms, for which Anna Atkins and Anne Dixon are jointly recognised. One, entitled *Cyanotypes of British and Foreign Ferns* (1853), is now held at the John Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, while pages of the second, *Cyanotypes of British and Foreign Flowering Plants and Ferns* (1854), are held by various museums and galleries, including the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. The third album was given and inscribed to 'Captain Henry Dixon' (1861), Anne's nephew by her older brother-in-law William.<sup>14</sup> These uniquely important works,

celebrated for both their scientific and artistic merit, have ensured that the name of Anne Dixon will be forever linked to that of her famous friend, Anna Atkins, in the history of photography.

Anne Dixon, who like Anna had remained childless, died at the vicarage in 1864 and lies buried outside the east window in the peaceful setting of St Andrew's churchyard, Ferring. Henry continued as vicar to the end, importantly overseeing the enlargement of St Mary's church in East Preston. After 38 years in the parish, he became the longest serving priest of Ferring; he died in 1870 and is interred with Anne in the heart of the village they loved and served so well. Anna Atkins died at home the following year and is buried in Halstead churchyard.

Today, when photography records everything from the outermost planets in space to the innermost workings of the human body, and has become an art form in its own right, it is fascinating to connect its early pioneers with the name of Anne Austen, a clergyman's wife in Sussex.



*Portrait of Anna Atkins, 1861  
Royal Photographic Society,  
Yorkshire*



*Ferring beach, West Sussex  
Photograph by Susan Dawes*

### *Notes*

- 1 The Jane Austen Society *Report* for 2009, p.74.
- 2 The Tonbridge Historical Society website [www.tonbridgehistory.org.uk/people/the-childrens.htm](http://www.tonbridgehistory.org.uk/people/the-childrens.htm) (21/05/2011).
- 3 'Everyman's Encyclopaedia', Dent, 1961.
- 4 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna\\_Atkins#cite\\_note-Parr-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Atkins#cite_note-Parr-1): *The photobook, a history, Volume I*, Parr, Martin; Gerry Badger, 2004, London: Phaidon; and *The book of alternative photographic processes, 2nd edn*, James, Christopher, Clifton Park, NY: Delmar Cengage Learning, 2009.
- 5 V & A Museum website [www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/curtis-moffat-working-methods/](http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/curtis-moffat-working-methods/)

- 6 Revd Rex D.T. Paterson, *St Andrew's Church in the Village of Ferring*, 1982, p. 11.
- 7 Ibid, p.14.
- 8 Michael Counsell, *England's Holy Places*, Canterbury Press, 2003, p.38. (Prayer of St Richard, Bishop of Chichester 1245-1253: 'Thanks be to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits which Thou hast given me, for all the pains and insults which Thou has borne for me, oh most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother, may I know Thee more clearly love Thee more dearly and follow Thee more nearly.')
- 9 *Workhouse Officers and their Responsibilities in East Preston Workhouse* (Local Studies Information Pack, compiled by Jackie Pilcher, West Sussex County Council Library Service).
- 10 R.W. Standing, *East Preston and Kingston an Illustrated History*, Phillimore, 2006.
- 11 Revd Edward Boyes Ellman, *Recollections of a Sussex Parson*, St Michael and All Angels, Berwick, 2006, p.239.
- 12 Paul Holden, *Typhoid, Bombs and Matrons, the History of Worthing Hospital*, p. 5.
- 13 Sally White, *Worthing Past*, Phillimore, 2000, p. 39.
- 14 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/anna\\_atkins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/anna_atkins) (Atkins, Anna; Larry J. Schaaf; Hans P. Kraus Jr. (1985). *Sun gardens: Victorian photograms*. New York: Aperture. ISBN 089381203X).

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Portrait of John George Children by Benjamin Rawlinson Faulkner, 1826, National Portrait Gallery [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John\\_George\\_Children.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John_George_Children.jpg)

Portrait of Anna Atkins albumen print, 1861, Royal Photographic Society, Yorkshire [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Anna\\_Atkins\\_1861.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Anna_Atkins_1861.jpg)

A Photogram of Algae, made by Anna Atkins as part of her 1843 book, *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions*. [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c4/Anna\\_Atkins\\_algae\\_cyanotype.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c4/Anna_Atkins_algae_cyanotype.jpg) (Courtesy of The New York Public Library [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).)

*My thanks for kind assistance from: Anne-Marie Clarke, Dr John Clarke, Adrian and Susan Dawes, and Anthony Wilson of the Tonbridge Historical Society.*

## Papers from the London Conference

### *Jane Austen and the credit crunch of 1816*

Markman Ellis

Jane Austen's novels, despite their romantic love plots and narrow focus on the world of the country gentry, evince a consistent curiosity about, and discourse on, trade, banking and credit. Like our own era in the twenty-first century, Jane Austen lived in a period of repeated and extended financial crisis, in which bankruptcy, debt and recession were a constant threat and a lived reality. This context underlies the attitudes to trade and credit in the novels. To explore the relationship between Jane Austen's novels and her economic ideas, this paper focuses on the collapse in 1816 of Austen and Co., the bank owned by her brother Henry Thomas Austen, an event of profound embarrassment to her extended family. So while her novels are not much given to macroeconomic theory, they nonetheless articulate an important discourse on trade and commerce.

The debate on trade, both its advantages and consequences, centred for Jane Austen on the status of the merchant, the man of commerce. Discussion about tradesmen and merchants was conducted within the historically-enduring debate on the nature of the gentleman, and was frequently related to questions of rank. Like many of her time, she expressed a deep unease about the moral probity of 'business' and of the 'commercial interest'. In an age deeply concerned with status and rank, to be associated with trade was categorically demeaning. To the critics of commercial spirit, trade was inimical to a gentleman's virtue, which was established by his financial autonomy, and made manifest in his real property, primarily land.<sup>1</sup> In this manner, each of Jane Austen's great gentlemen is identified by and through his estate — Darcy and Pemberley, Rushworth and Sotherton, Mr Knightley and Donwell Abbey — so that the estate almost becomes a synecdoche

for his virtue, and hence his marital eligibility. Possession of a great landed estate is a guarantee of a gentleman's 'independence', a key term she uses to describe the economic agency afforded to gentlemen by their wealth. A fortune allowed freedom of action, without depending on others, making it unnecessary for the possessor to earn a living: as such, sufficient wealth, 'a competence', was enough to guarantee independence, even 'an independence'.<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, moralists argued, a merchant, even if prosperous, lacked this essential independence of action. A tradesman or merchant continually relied on others, having established bonds of trust and dependence through contracts and systems of credit. According to contemporary economic analysis, a merchant's capital was constantly circulating, as he (or rarely she) invested in raw materials, put out the work to artisans, and sold the resulting production. A merchant did not rely on his independent wealth, like a gentleman, but on his credit. To critics, this financial dependence led also to an ethical dependence on others. Sentimental novelists of the eighteenth century, such as Henry Brooke or Henry Mackenzie, examined this distrust of the 'trade interest' in some detail, making merchants and their moral choices central characters in the development of plot and argument. While not developing sustained argument on the topic, Jane Austen's novels display a consistent attitudinal pattern that casts doubt on the moral probity of commerce and trade.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, several characters have close connections to trade and the professions and, as such, they lack the independence afforded by landed estate. The Bennets, for example, remain close to trade and the law. Mrs Bennet's father was once a lawyer, leaving her £4000. Her sister Mrs Phillips is married to the lawyer (clerk) who succeeded in that business. Her brother, Mr Gardiner, is still a successful merchant, and resides in Gracechurch Street in the City of London. Although he is described as a 'sensible, gentlemanlike man' (note that '-like'), his proximity to the scene of commerce arouses comment: 'The Netherfield ladies would have had difficulty in believing that a man who lived by trade, and within view of his own warehouses, could have been so well-bred and agreeable'.<sup>3</sup> Trade in their view is morally degrading and vulgar, even if it produces wealth and prosperity. Others in the novel are also perilously close to trade: Sir William Lucas, the father of Elizabeth's friend Charlotte Lucas,

had been formerly in trade in Meryton, where he had made a tolerable fortune and risen to the honour of knighthood by an address to the King during his mayoralty. The distinction had perhaps been felt too strongly. It had given him a disgust to his business and to his residence in a small market town; and quitting them both, he had removed with his family to a house about a mile from Meryton denominated from that period Lucas Lodge, where he could think with pleasure of his own importance, and, unshackled by business, occupy himself solely in being civil to all the world. (*P&P*, I, 5, 19)

Sir William Lucas, it seems, had sought to make the transition from trade to

independence, rejecting the corrupting effects of trade, and adopting the values of the landed elite.

The Bingleys' arrival grants the novel's examination of the morality of the trading interest more complications. The narrator informs the reader of their splendid wealth: Mr Bingley has a fortune of £100,000 and his two sisters £20,000 each. But despite their insistence on their gentility, the narrator further notes that their wealth is of recent origin: 'They were of a respectable family in the north of England; a circumstance more deeply impressed on their memories than that their brother's fortune and their own had been acquired by trade' (*P&P*, I, 4, 16). Readers have speculated what trade the Bingley fortune was made in: wool, manufacturing or coal-mining all suggest themselves. Nonetheless, the Bingleys firmly disavow their family's connection to trade, especially that it is of so recent an origin as one generation – compare the many generations of independent leisure that Darcy's family have invested in their library at Pemberley (*P&P*, I, 8, 41). The narrator underlines the Bingley sisters' hypocrisy by staging a scene in which they stigmatise the Bennet girls for their 'vulgar relations' and proximity to trade.

'I have an excessive regard for Miss Jane Bennet, she is really a very sweet girl, and I wish with all my heart she were well settled. But with such a father and mother, and such low connections, I am afraid there is no chance of it.'

'I think I have heard you say that their uncle is an attorney in Meryton.'

'Yes; and they have another, who lives somewhere near Cheapside.'

'That is capital,' added her sister, and they both laughed heartily.

'If they had uncles enough to fill *all* Cheapside,' cried Bingley, 'it would not make them one jot less agreeable.'

'But it must very materially lessen their chance of marrying men of any consideration in the world,' replied Darcy. (*P&P*, I, 8, 40)

Jane Austen's pun on 'capital' (an exclamation of approval but also redolent of financial capital, assets of monetary worth) reveals the precarious fragility of the difference the Bingleys perceive between their own position and that of the Bennets. Mr Gardiner's residence in Gracechurch Street is rendered more vulgar by being relocated to 'Cheapside', which despite its comically commercial name, was one of the City's most opulent centres of shops, showrooms, and goldsmiths. As the plot argues, seeing through these prejudices is the moral imperative. One instance is Mr Gardiner's display of active moral probity, which he proves by actually doing something to rescue Lydia and Wickham. More generally, both Elizabeth and Darcy have to learn that to be happy they have to accept each other without pride or prejudice. Perhaps it is possible to reconcile trade and virtue.

### **Austen and Co.**

Jane Austen's own family had as close connections to the world of banking and finance as the Bennets and Bingleys. Jane Austen's brother Henry had established his bank in 1806, leveraging his success as an army agent. His partners in the

London bank were Henry Maunde and later James Tilson, both former army agents with a background like that of Henry Austen in the Oxfordshire Militia. Austen took the lead in establishing a network of country banks: Austen, Grey and Vincent in Alton; and sister banks in Petersfield and Hythe. The banks were known generally as Austen and Co. The main London premises of Austen and Co. were in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, where the firm was known for its lucrative military connections. The bank made a number of large personal loans to high-ranking army figures, including Francis Rawdon-Hastings, Lord Moira, later Governor General of Bengal, Lord Charles Spencer, a militia colonel, and John, Lord Crewe, a major-general. Such loans were considered sound during the war years, although the financial position of Moira, for one, was widely known to be very fragile, and his promissory notes circulated at a substantial discount. But such soft loans presumably bolstered the bank's influence in gaining profitable army banking contracts.

Jane Austen, of course, lived in a period of economic turmoil. In February 1797, in a severe foreign exchange crisis, the Bank of England suspended payments on their own notes. Up until this time, any person could present a Bank of England note at the teller's desk in Threadneedle Street, and receive the stated value of gold or silver. After February 1797, the payment in specie ceased. The 'Suspension of Cash Payments' or the 'Bank Restriction', as it was known, was a significant financial crisis. James Gillray depicted the scenario in gendered terms in his political satire entitled 'Political-ravishment, or the old lady of Threadneedle-Street in danger!' (1797): the Bank of England, an old lady dressed in clothing made of paper money, stoutly resists the advances, both sexually and financially improper, from the prime minister, William Pitt the Younger.<sup>4</sup> The 'Bank Restriction' lasted until the 'gold standard', as it came to be known in the 1830s, was established by legislation in 1819 (enacted in 1821).<sup>5</sup>

To understand this anxiety about paper currency, it is necessary to explore bank-notes further. The Bank of England first issued bank notes in 1696: cash notes that were perceived as receipts for debt, and were negotiable (payable to others by endorsement). Thereafter the Bank tried to encourage people to accept Bank of England paper notes that claimed to be payable on demand in specie at the bank itself: the paper stood in for, or represented, the gold or silver in the bank. In 1752, they innovated by making out bank-notes to 'bearer' – whoever was carrying it – rather than to a named individual, using a form of words still current on British bank-notes. During the Bank Restriction, Bank of England notes were not redeemable for gold, and as a result, especially after 1809, were widely discounted, notably in provincial towns, where they were not widely circulated. Local banks issued their own notes using similar formulations and visual iconography. Henry Austen's bank in Alton issued bank-notes with the same form of words: 'Alton Bank promise to pay the bearer the sum of *Ten Pounds*, here or at Messrs Austen Maunde & Austen, Bankers London'.<sup>6</sup>

However, it is clear that from the suspension of cash payments in 1797, until their reinstitution in 1821, bank-notes that circulated in England were viewed with

a certain amount of suspicion. Was the note worth the sum that was printed on it? Paper credit had long attracted such anxieties, but the fictional quality of paper credit was now palpable. Bank-notes were routinely discounted, so that they were worth less than the stated value, and this was especially true of Bank of England notes in provincial towns at some distance from London. Local notes, issued by a country bank, and backed by a specific and visible man of local worth, were trusted as more credit-worthy. The Great Restriction intensified the doubtful or sceptical feelings customers had about the true value of bank-notes: that is, they doubted the truth of the statements and promises made on them. Such doubts are present at all times, of course, but can be banished during times of prosperity. But those fears can come true in the case of hyper-inflation: France in the 1790s had suffered from rapid and extended devaluation of the Republican currency of assignats, which were devalued to worthlessness. The last century has seen hyper-inflation numerous times, most famously in Germany in October 1923, most recently in Zimbabwe in November 2008. In early nineteenth-century England, the Bank Restriction avoided the worst excesses of devaluation.

Nonetheless, during the Restriction, the genre of the bank-note operated under the sign of irony. The literary critic M.H. Abrams defines irony as 'a statement in which the meaning that a speaker employs is sharply different from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed'. A bank-note in this period was ironic in that the value printed on it was not what it was worth. As Abrams goes on to say, 'The ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation, but with indications in the overall speech-situation that the speaker intends a very different, and often opposite, attitude or evaluation'.<sup>7</sup> The bank-note had become, and always retains the potential to become, an ironic statement, with the reader of the note watching carefully for signs that its value was not as it claimed. In the same way that a bank-note has many features designed to reassure us that it is not forged (special paper, printing techniques) and that it is as valuable as it says it is (iconography, iterative statements), readers of bank-notes are also constantly wary, looking for the signs or tells of fraud and bubble.

Jane Austen has little place for bank-notes in her fiction. The only instance of a bank-note in a novel, however, appears under the sign of moral doubt. In *Sense and Sensibility*, the unsympathetic John Dashwood describes the liberality offered by his mother-in-law Mrs Ferrars: 'The other day, as soon as we came to town, aware that money could not be very plenty with us just now, she put bank-notes into Fanny's hands to the amount of two hundred pounds. And extremely acceptable it is, for we must live at a great expense while we are here' (*S&S*, II, 11, 255). The reckless prodigality of Mrs Ferrars's gift is reinforced by the Dashwoods' extravagant style of living, despite an apparent shortage of money. Bank-notes, as readily transferable cash, are here associated with vaguely disreputable dealings, with mercenary goings on, and with ruinous luxury.

More generally, Jane Austen's novels are notable for their curiosity concerning characters' worth, their wealth and their income, which is often quantified and stated in monetary form; they depict a world that depends on the consistent



monetization of status value.<sup>8</sup> It is possible, for example, to be surprisingly precise about the wealth of most characters in *Pride and Prejudice*. In addition to what is already known about the Bingleys (surveyed above), the reader is informed that the Bennet family's Longbourn estate (entailed on Mr Collins) is worth £2000 p.a. (equivalent to £50,000); that Mrs Bennet's marriage settlement of £5000 yields £200 p.a. (*P&P*, I, 7, 31); and that Fitzwilliam Darcy's Pemberley estate is worth £10,000 p.a. (equivalent to £250,000) (*P&P*, I, 3, 10). The precise detail of how much each character is 'worth' in monetary terms reinforces the sense that the marriage market is determined by financial interest. Miss King's unexpected inheritance of £10,000 renders her suddenly the target of Wickham's courtship, although her fortune is the 'most remarkable charm of the young lady' (*P&P*, II, 3, 169). The plots of the novels, however, more often turn on the establishment of a worth determined in terms of virtue: in this sense, Miss King's connection with Wickham is cruelly analyzed in the next chapter (*P&P*, II, 4) in terms of mercenary and prudent motives. The novels' courtship plots suggest that while wealth is important in marriage, so too is love or affection: each potential marriage partner has their financial situation laid out, and the plot follows the financial dealings of marriage with as much acuity as it does the love interest. Although readers become habituated to the monetized value of suitors and matches in Jane Austen, that this is unusual gets forgotten: most novelists of the period are not so fiscally determined. In *Pride and Prejudice*, her trick is to reward most handsomely the two women, Elizabeth and Jane, who most firmly eschew mercenary marriages, who prefer their suitors for prudential reasons of personal moral probity and affection rather than for wealth. That Darcy and Bingley are also wealthy is Jane Austen's reward for the virtuous, however disingenuous.

### **The 1816 Credit Crunch**

There had been serious financial crises in 1793 and 1797, and again in 1810. As the war in Europe came to its end in 1814 and 1815, a new period of financial instability intensified, when the huge expenditure on the military was being wound down. This affected men in various kinds of business, including farmers, grain merchants and manufacturers. There were also numerous bank failures: 33 during the harvest year of 1815-16, and 16 in the next year. Austen and Co., Henry Austen's bank, was one of these.<sup>9</sup> A full account of the bankruptcy of the Austen bank is offered by two articles by T.A.B. Corley and Clive Caplan, both published in 1998.<sup>10</sup> The account that follows makes extensive use of both: Caplan's article is the stronger on the rise of Austen and Co. and its relationship to the army agency business, while Corley offers a detailed and precise account of the circumstances of Henry Austen's bank failure. The narrow focus of both, however, suggests that there is more to say about the wider context of banking and credit in the early nineteenth century, especially in relation to Jane Austen's fiction.

In addition to his banking activities, in July 1813 Henry Austen was appointed Receiver-General of land and assessed taxes for Oxfordshire, responsible for the collection of tax money and its transmission to government. The post required him

to make quarterly personal tours of the county, accompanied by clerks and guards, to collect tax receipts and remit them to the Exchequer in London. In compensation, the Receiver-General took a small commission on the sums collected (amounting to about £600-700 per annum), and, more usefully, was allowed to run a balance of up to £6,500, and to hold the collected money on interest for up to six weeks. As the annual amount collected was almost £100,000 for Oxfordshire, this would have enhanced his position and influence in London.

The end of the war in Europe in 1814 and again in 1815 presented severe difficulties to Austen and Co. All three of its most lucrative markets were assailed. The collapse in agricultural prices when the war ended meant that the country bank business was suddenly problematic. Credit extended to agricultural traders and farmers was now viewed as sub-prime. In response, Austen tried to insulate his London bank from the contagion by withdrawing from the Alton partnership in October 1815. Nonetheless, when the Alton bank stopped payments on 28 November, Austen and Co. were left holding nearly £10,000 in worthless debts (it seems the remaining partners, Gray and Vincent, had been siphoning off the bank's liquid assets, and it owed the London bank £6,400 for the notes and balances at Alton, and £3,500 from other transactions). The Alton crash had significant cultural and social consequences for the town and for Jane Austen, but also for the main bank in London.<sup>11</sup>

Following the collapse of the Alton bank, Henry tried to restore the credit of his bank by borrowing further funds from his brother Edward Austen, by renting out his splendid townhouse in Hans Place, and mortgaging the lease. Nonetheless, the situation did not improve, and on 15 March 1816 Austen and Co. in Henrietta Street stopped payment. Henry 'Austin' (incorrectly spelled) was declared bankrupt in the *London Gazette* on 16 March 1816; as the law decreed, Commissioners of Bankruptcy were appointed to discover his debts and assets. The announcement duly appeared in the press, in newspapers and magazines, for all to see.<sup>12</sup> On 23 March the branches in Petersfield and Hythe stopped payment too, and Austen's partner, Williams Stevens Louch, was gazetted bankrupt. Hearings for bankruptcy were held and reported in the Guildhall in London at the end of April.

The Guildhall proceedings discovered that Henry Austen was deeply in debt to the crown: his debts were assessed at £44,000, comprising £30,600 receipts for the 1814 Oxfordshire taxes, which had not been paid over to the Exchequer, and £13,600 for the current year's bill. Henry's relatives and friends, who had stood as sureties for his business, were required to make good the difference: Edward Knight and James Leigh-Perrot paid £21,000 in instalments between April 1816 and 18 March 1817. (Leigh-Perrot died 28 March 1817; thereafter his widow had to sell securities worth over £8,600 towards the remainder of the debt, which was paid off by 1818). The Court of Exchequer found substantial total losses: in Henry Austen's estimate, his total debts equalled £58,000, against assets of £52,000. Although the shortfall was 'only' around £6,000, Henry's assets also included a large number of personal loans – approx. £33,000 – issued without proper regard to their likely repayment (what is now called 'subprime'). Some of these debts,

which were unlikely ever to be paid, went back as far as 1805. Over £10,000 of personal loans were made after the Alton bank collapsed in December 1815 (£2,900 in December, almost £7,000 between January and March), when the prospects for the bank were very limited. This was a catastrophic failure that led to very large calls on the wider Austen family to make good the debt. The scale of the Austen losses is hard to estimate; the National Archives' historical monetary values conversion tool estimates £5,8000 in 1816 as being worth something like £2,000,000 in 2012. But modern values for historical sums are hard to estimate, and the sum under-represents the scale of Henry's losses. The question remains, how much did it affect Jane Austen, if at all?

### **Country banking**

Jane Austen has no scene set in a bank, and there is little mention of banking in her novels, although John Dashwood mentions his banker in *Sense and Sensibility* (*S&S*, II, 11, 256). But although she says little about banking, she can be assumed to have spent enough time in a bank to know how it worked. She visited Henry Austen's residence above the London bank at Henrietta Street on numerous occasions in 1813 and 1814: in September 1813 she remarked in a letter that the family were visited by James Tilson, one of the bank's partners, from the 'Compting House' downstairs.<sup>13</sup> She must also have frequented the Alton branch, Austen, Gray and Vincent, in the High Street in Alton, after she moved to Chawton in 1809. Her letters reveal that she used the bank as an address to send and receive letters. It can be assumed that she used her family bank-notes. As a contemporary commentator noted, 'the business of the country is almost entirely carried on by paper currency, i.e. by the notes of those different banking companies; with which purchases and payments of all kinds are commonly made'.<sup>14</sup> During the Bank Restriction, when Bank of England notes were widely discounted, local notes like those issued by the Austen bank in Alton were regarded more highly. Many families and businesses would have placed special trust in the credit and promises on the Austen family.

There can also be little doubt that Jane had a good idea about how important Austen and Co was to Alton. The branch in the High Street would have been central to the local economy. Some recent historical research about a country bank in Surrey in this period shows that the customers ranged in wealth from sizable landowners to relatively poor local traders with very little capital, and that most lived within ten miles of the bank.<sup>15</sup> Country banks had an important role in the prosperity of the town, extending credit to local farmers and grain dealers against the returns of the harvest. They also issued bank-notes, which were mostly intended for local circulation, where the personal credit of the local bankers acted as a guarantee. Country banks performed other financial services too, offering savings accounts (for example at 3% for deposits held for 3 months and 4% for longer). They accepted bills of exchange at a 5% discount on face value, and they enabled payments between themselves and their London agent. In Henry Austen's case, being a partner in Alton and in London expedited this trade. Through their London agent, country banks could also arrange dividend payments on Government Stock,

which had to be done in person at the Bank of England in London. The partners of a country bank were significant figures in country towns. Banking relied on an impressive social performance, one that inspired confidence. Credit still meant the face credit of the banker: as in the Stock Exchange in London, the personal presence of the banker in his office, and at places of assembly around the town (the inn, the town hall, at church) served as an important guarantee of his business. Persons in town would ask themselves whether they believed him to be a trustworthy man, whether they continued to be satisfied as to his credit. Being a member of the family of the local banker in Alton lent even Jane Austen prestige and esteem.

The event of Henry Austen's bankruptcy and the stopping of payments by Austen and Co. in Alton was in this sense a considerable local catastrophe. The bankrupt himself would have experienced the proceedings as a very public humiliation. Bankruptcy, which it can be argued is an important correlative to the risk-taking of enterprise, was nonetheless associated with profound stigma. Richard Steele in *The Spectator* (No. 456, 13 August 1712) opined that 'Nothing indeed can be more unhappy than the condition of bankruptcy. The calamity which happens to us by ill fortune, or by the injury of others, has in it some consolation; but what arises from our own misbehaviour or error, is the state of the most exquisite sorrow.' Defoe argued in 1726 that the bankrupt experiences breaking as almost a physical insult: 'Breaking is the death of a tradesman; he is mortally stabb'd, or, as we may say, shot thro' the head in his trading capacity; his shop is shut up, as it is when a man is buried; his credit, the life blood of his trade, is stagnated ... in a word, his fame, and even his name as to trade is buried, and the commissioners that act upon him, and all their proceedings, are but like the executioner.'<sup>16</sup> The stigma attached to bankruptcy was reinforced by all the most esteemed moral laws of Jane Austen's society: credit, trust, honesty. When a debtor fails to repay, that action inevitably involves an untrustworthy act: a lie, breaking a promise. The bankrupt is 'untrustworthy; he should not have been trusted in the past and must never be trusted in the future. ... Bankruptcy was always akin to dishonesty, even though unexpected losses are to be expected in business.'<sup>17</sup>

When a country bank stopped payment, the effect on the local economy was devastating. The collapse of the Austen and Co. bank in Alton has left no particular record, but Charles Lamb described the effect of a bank collapse in Salisbury in 1810, when he happened to be in town.

The city of Salisbury is full of weeping and wailing. The Bank has stopped payment; and everybody in the town kept money at it, or has got some of its notes. Some have lost all they had in the world. It is the next thing to seeing a city with a plague within its walls. The Wilton people are all undone. All the manufacturers there kept cash at the Salisbury bank; and I do suppose it to be the unhappiest county in England, where I am making holiday.<sup>18</sup>

Lamb's chosen image for the economic distress caused by the failure of a country bank is the plague: a devastating local catastrophe, causing great

unhappiness and financial disaster for many local families. Although the official record in the Austen family suggests that the family took the bank's failure in its stride, it nonetheless must have been excruciatingly embarrassing locally. Many local families will have lost money kept on deposit in the bank; many would have been left holding worthless Austen and Co. bank-notes. The wide circulation of the Austen bankruptcy notice in newspapers and journals further meant that everyone would know intimate details of the family calamity. The bankruptcy notice, and subsequent equally embarrassing notices concerning the sale of Henry's business premises and private house, were all publicly noted by the press.<sup>19</sup> Although the family remained wealthy in local terms, their credit must have been severely tested.

### **Fiction and finance in an age of paper-credit**

What are we to make of this familial history of financial instability in relation to Jane Austen's novels? The consistent attitude towards money and credit in them points to some wider conclusions about the fictionality of print in an age of paper-credit. The novels do a lot of testing of the value of characters' statements and moral probity through the use of irony. Her plots ask: can these characters be trusted to be who they claim they are? Are they worth what they say they are, not simply in monetary terms, but in moral terms? Irony is of course the signal literary effect of Jane Austen's fiction: in *Pride and Prejudice* Elizabeth uses her irony to explore the moral dimensions of her world, as a way of uncovering the motives of those around her. She learns to see through the fictional claims to moral value made by Wickham, who is exposed as a fake note. She also has to learn to overcome her misreading of the value of Darcy: clearly he is worth what he said he was in financial terms, but it turns out that her doubts about his moral value were misplaced; she has to learn to trust his moral bank-notes as well. And of course, Darcy has to learn to accept Elizabeth's value for herself (her face-value), overlooking the extensive discounting of her reputation attempted by Caroline Bingley and Lady Catherine de Bourgh. At the end of the novel, when Elizabeth and Darcy are married, Caroline Bingley, who had of course expressed such a profound dislike of Elizabeth's commercial connections, decides she can overlook these because she wants to continue her visits to Pemberley, and so she 'paid off every arrear of civility' (*P&P*, III, 19, 430). It is with some irony that Jane Austen uses such a mercantile metaphor for a transaction of polite sociability.

The collapse of Austen and Co. in 1816 may have intensified these feelings about credit and worth, bringing new focus to the questions of reputation and moral probity that Jane Austen's novels are concerned with. But the experience of being one of a family of country bankers, even in a time of prosperity, would have done this too, as neighbours and friends asked themselves whether Austen and Co. was worth what it said it was. The bankruptcy of Henry Austen in the credit crunch of 1816 was a spectacular and public stain on the Austen family. Through his family's intervention, however, Henry Austen himself effected a rapid recovery. He was discharged from bankruptcy on 8 June 1816, having surrendered all his assets, and

having had all his enormous debts paid by his family. Jane Austen, as Corley has shown, lost the £25.7.0 she had on deposit in her brother's bank, although the £600 she had invested in Navy 5 per cent stock was safe. Henry lay low for the rest of the year, staying with various members of the family; then in December 1816 he took holy orders with the Bishop of Winchester's permission, becoming curate at Chawton at 52 guineas a year. As a later generation of the Austen family observed, Henry Austen 'possessed an almost exasperating buoyancy and sanguineness of temperament and high animal spirits which no misfortune could depress and no failures damp.'<sup>20</sup> Even so, it was not until 1843 that the Bankruptcy Court formally closed the case of Austen, Maunde and Tilson.

### Notes

- 1 J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 112.
- 2 For 'competence' see Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, ed. by Edward Copeland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), I, 17, 104; for an 'independence', Jane Austen, *Emma*, ed. by Richard Cronin and Dorothy McMillan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), I, 2, 13. Hereafter *Sense and Sensibility* will be referenced in the text at S&S.
- 3 Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II 2 158. Hereafter referenced in the text as P&P.
- 4 James Gillray, 'Political-Ravishment, or the old lady of Threadneedle-Street in danger!' (London: H. Humphrey St James's Street: May 22 1797). See also M. Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the British Museum*, VII (London: British Museum, 1942), no. 9016.
- 5 R. G. Hawtrey, 'The Bank Restriction of 1797', *The Economic Journal*, 28: 109 (March 1918), pp. 52-65; Randall McGowen, 'The Bank of England and the Policing of Forgery 1797-1821', *Past & Present*, 186 (February 2005), pp. 81-116.
- 6 Alton Bank, unissued bank-note, British Museum, Department of Coins & Medals, Registration number: 1981,1122.2.
- 7 M. H. Abrams and G.G. Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 9th edn., Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009.
- 8 Samuel Macey, *Money and the Novel: Mercenary Motivation in Defoe and his Immediate Successors* (Victoria, B.C: Sono Nis Press, 1983).
- 9 Leslie Sedden Pressnell, *Country Banking in the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 461.
- 10 T.A.B. Corley, 'Jane Austen and her brother Henry's bank failure, 1815-1816', *Jane Austen Society Report*, 1998, pp. 12-23 and Clive Caplan, 'Jane Austen's Banker Brother: Henry Thomas Austen of Austen & Co., 1801-1816', *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal*, 20 (1998), pp. 69-90.
- 11 Further insight into the shady goings on between Austen and Co. London and the Alton rump was revealed in a well-reported court case in June 1816:

- ‘GRANT and others v. AUSTEN and others’, Saturday 29 June 1816, in George Price, *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Court of Exchequer From Trinity Term, 56 Geo. III. to Sittings after Trinity Term, 57 Geo. III Both Inclusive. Vol. III* (London: W. Clarke and Sons, 1818). The court report revealed that on Saturday 25 November 1815, Maunde and Tilson turned up at Austen, Grey and Vincent in Alton, and demanded that Grey repay either £1,700 or £2,000 immediately. This demand was the immediate cause of his stopping payments on the following Tuesday, the 28th. As the court record says, ‘It appeared that *Gray* had considerably overdrawn on *Austen* and Co. and was, therefore, at that time, much indebted to them’. The case revealed that the Austen bank network had generated credit for itself by drawing or borrowing money from its own branch or subsidiary, a form of financial misconduct later known as ‘pig on pork’.
- 12 Amongst newspapers listing Henry Austin’s [sic] bankruptcy were: *The Morning Chronicle*, March 22 1816; *The Derby Mercury*, March 21, 1816; *The Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser*, March 23, 1816; *Royal Cornwall Gazette, Falmouth Packet & Plymouth Journal*, March 23, 1816. Weekly and monthly magazines that listed it included: *The Examiner*, 429 (17 March 1816), p. 171; *The European Magazine, and London Review*, 69 (March 1816), pp. 280-283; *The New Monthly Magazine*, 5, 27 (April 1816), p. 278.
  - 13 Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, Henrietta Street, London, 16 September 1813, in *Jane Austen’s Letters*, ed. by Deirdre Le Faye, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 223.
  - 14 ‘Bank’, *Encyclopædia Britannica: or, A dictionary of arts and sciences*, ed. by W. Smellie, 5th edn ed James Millar, 20 vols, (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1817), III, p. 366.
  - 15 Peter Jenkins, *Banking in Surrey* (Pulborough, West Sussex: Dragonwheel Books, 2004), p. 16.
  - 16 Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (1725), in *Volume 7: Religious and Didactic Writing of Daniel Defoe* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007), p. 81.
  - 17 Julian Hoppit, *Risk and failure in English business 1700-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
  - 18 *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb*, ed. by Edwin Marris (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), III, 52-53.
  - 19 The sale of the ‘late Banking-house of Messrs. Austen, Maunde and Tilson’, in Henrietta Street Covent Garden was advertised in *The Morning Chronicle*, 22 August 1816. The forced sale of Henry Austen’s house in Middlesex was noted in *The Morning Chronicle*, 27 May 1817.
  - 20 W. Austen-Leigh and M.G. Knight, *Chawton Manor and its Owners* (London: Smith, Elder, 1911), pp. 163-64.

## *The life of Henry Edgar Austen Esq: Jane Austen's strange prophecy*

Alanah Buck and Helen Atkinson

When, in 1811, Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra 'I give you joy of our new nephew, & hope if he ever comes to be hanged, it will not be until we are too old to care about it',<sup>1</sup> she could not have imagined how prophetic those words would prove to be. Henry Edgar Austen did indeed die by hanging in 1854, thus completing Jane's strange prophecy. Cassandra had been dead almost ten years and Jane herself almost forty, and they were by then, as Jane had hoped, long passed caring.

Henry, the second son and third child of Jane's brother Frank, a naval officer, was one of eleven children. His mother Mary was twenty-six when Henry arrived in the world in the seaside town of Southsea, near Portsmouth, on 21 April, 1811.<sup>2</sup> While he was probably named after his Uncle Henry Austen, his middle name was chosen to acknowledge his maternal line, Ann Edgar being his great-grandmother. Mary, a Gibson by birth, is described as being fair in colouring, with a cheerful but resilient disposition.<sup>3</sup> Sadly, her resilience failed her after her eleventh baby, and she did not live to see Henry's thirteenth birthday, dying at Gosport in 1823 from the complications of childbirth.

Henry's early years were spent at various locations including Deal, Alton and Steventon, and even though his father was frequently absent from home, Henry was not in want of amusement during his formative years. After a visit to Frank and Mary at Alton in 1817, Jane describes the young Austens as noisy and unruly, but softens the image by adding, 'I cannot help liking them & even loving them.'<sup>4</sup> The siblings closest to Henry in age were Mary Jane, Frank Jnr, George, Cassandra and Herbert, who were obviously lively playmates. But it was not until 1818, when his sister Catherine was born, that he found a sibling who would become a favourite companion. Catherine would share Henry's passion for poetry and the arts and their lives would become even further entwined when Henry brought home a friend, John Hubback, who was to later become Catherine's husband. Ironically, both men shared a similar fate.

Henry was only six years old when his Aunt Jane died in Winchester, which must have seemed very far away, if indeed he was even made aware of the event. He had spent some of his young life in the company of Jane and Cassandra, but, unlike many of the other Austen nieces and nephews, their opinion of Henry's nature and prospects has not survived. Henry certainly had retained early memories of Chawton, which he later related to his cousin Caroline: 'he told me once, that his visits were always a disappointment to him – for that he could not help expecting to feel particularly happy at Chawton and never til he got there, could he fully realise to himself how all its peculiar pleasures were gone'.<sup>5</sup> The 'peculiar pleasures' provided by Aunt Jane must have left a lasting impression on the young Henry and



made his visits, as an adult, to an elderly Aunt Cassandra a somewhat melancholy experience in comparison.

There is ample evidence to show that Henry continued to be an active and caring member of his family throughout his life. He is recorded as attending his stepmother Martha's funeral in 1843,<sup>6</sup> and he was present again at Portsdown Lodge to bid farewell to his father and four of his siblings who were leaving for the West Indies in 1845. During this visit to Portsdown Lodge he was called upon to act in his professional capacity when he witnessed the Will<sup>7</sup> of his Aunt Cassandra, who had suffered a fatal stroke. A visit to Portsdown Lodge in 1849 required another sad service to be performed by Henry: this time he was responsible for the registration of the death of his younger sister, Cassandra Eliza.<sup>8</sup> In 1850 Henry attended his Uncle Henry Thomas's funeral<sup>9</sup> and thereby bade farewell to both uncle and mentor. Two years before his death, Henry's family loyalty was on display when, in a letter to *The Times*, he defended his Uncle Charles after criticism of his naval command.

Poetry was important in the lives of Henry and Catherine. Henry was a prolific producer of verse, pouring out his emotions in numerous stanzas. In an acrostic poem using her name, he berates his cousin, Fanny Palmer Austen, for being a neglectful correspondent as she has failed to reply to his last letter. Poetry also appears to have been an outlet for some of Henry's personal angst and he makes reference to his disenchantment with the law in a number of stanzas; however, his poetical themes were not always so negatively engaged: he sends an amusing poem to his sister Fanny Sophia, in which he describes a waltz, where his partner almost lost her dignity, and he his honour, moving to a false step. Along with his love of poetry, Henry seems to have indulged, like his sister, in sketching; a comical pen and ink drawing of a mob cap is attributed to him in Catherine's notebook. These artistic pursuits reflect a sensitive character that is balanced with a sense of humour.

David Hopkinson suggests that Henry shared his namesake, Uncle Henry's, volatile nature, but not his confidence. Henry spent his early education under the guidance of his Uncle Henry Thomas, Jane's older brother, and was, of course, exposed to his ideas and tastes. Under the tutelage of his uncle, Henry proved an able and advanced student and probably formed much of his literary inclination and skills during this time. The older Henry was also known to turn his hand to poetry, evidenced by his ode to Godmersham, and was a keen participator in the family's theatricals.

Like his two younger brothers, George and Edward, Henry attended St John's College, Oxford, gained his BA in 1833<sup>10</sup> and was admitted to the Inner Temple on 11 November later the same year; he was called to the Bar three years later on 18 November, 1836. Edward and George went on to a life in the Church and the remaining brothers, Herbert and Frank Jnr, duly followed their father into the Navy. Thus, in becoming a barrister, Henry broke with established Austen tradition. His uncles, excepting Edward Knight and the intellectually challenged George, had all entered either the Church or the Navy; only a Knight cousin, Edward's second son,

George Thomas, became a barrister in 1830, six years prior to Henry. It appears to be the maternal side of Henry's family, the Gibsons, that provide the link with the law: his grandfather, John Gibson, was a practising barrister in the Middle Temple and may have influenced the young Henry in his career choice.

From the time Henry Edgar Austen was called to the Bar until his death he maintained chambers at 7 New Square, Lincoln's Inn. He practised as an equity draftsman and conveyancer and was also listed as active in the Winchester Quarter Sessions from 1837-1842 in the Law Lists. Charles Dickens was a contemporary of Henry Edgar Austen – in fact both men were born within a few months and a few miles of each other;



7 New Square

Dickens's early experiences as a legal clerk provide a backdrop to novels such as *Bleak House* where he portrays the legal environment with which Henry would have been more than familiar: 'When we came to the court, there was the Lord Chancellor ... a long row of solicitors, with bundles of papers ... and then there were the gentlemen of the bar in wigs and gowns – some awake and some asleep, and one talking, and nobody paying much attention to what he said.' Henry's pointed dislike of his career as suggested by some of his poems shows that he and Dickens shared similar views on the legal profession:

Law – always hateful – most so when it winds  
Its tangled meshes around unwilling minds,  
I hate the law – and Equity's a worse,  
More undefined, more arbitrary curse.<sup>11</sup>

Like other bachelor barristers Henry also lived in his chambers and can be found there on the evenings of the census for 1841<sup>12</sup> and 1851.<sup>13</sup> Not all barristers who resided in their chambers were actively employed in the pursuit of the law. Some had minimal involvement in practising the law and used the Inns of Court for the connections they offered while others sought promotion and financial rewards. How active Henry Edgar was as a barrister is not clear, but a review of his account at Hoares Bank from 1851-1853, shows that half of his credits were due to investments (bonds, dividends etc), a third from his father, Admiral Sir Frank Austen, and the remainder predominantly cash deposits.

One notable aspect of London life in this period was the existence of gentlemen's clubs. Most gentlemen belonged to at least one club and they formed the opportunities for networking, socialising and provided a daily haven from their work lives, the latter being especially important to bachelors. Clubs had regulated memberships and provided gentlemen with a library, newspaper, a good dinner and a way of 'agreeably passing away an idle hour'.<sup>14</sup> Henry was no exception and

was a member of the Oxford and Cambridge Club<sup>15</sup> and in his letter to his cousin Anna in the final year of his life he describes how he typically returned home about 11pm each night.<sup>16</sup>

Although Henry may not have relished the law as a career choice, the Inner Temple provided him with a valuable network of colleagues. In 1841, eleven barristers had chambers at 7 New Square;<sup>17</sup> however, only two others besides Henry were resident the night of the census, namely John Edward Bright and Thomas Jodrell Phillips; Phillips was also resident at 7 New Square in the following census, ten years later.<sup>18</sup> Thomas appears to have had minimal involvement with the practice of law and in later life inherited money and large estates in Cheshire and Derbyshire and the challenging name of Thomas Jodrell Phillips-Jodrell.<sup>19</sup> His life-long interest in science and medicine benefited from his wealth, and he donated money to Kew Gardens, University College London and Cambridge University, among others. A letter by the novelist Henry James in 1877 describes him: 'I dined with a very pleasant old gentleman who seems kindly disposed to me – A Mr Phillips-Jodrell .... He is an old bachelor of fortune & culture ... is a very pretty specimen of a certain sort of fresh-colored, blue-eyed, simple minded yet cultivated ... old English gentleman.'<sup>20</sup> James's description of him as 'simple minded' may have been insightful because within two years Phillips-Jodrell was the subject of a Commission of Lunacy and he spent the remainder of his life in a private lunatic asylum; the cause appears to have been some form of senile dementia or related malady.

John Edward Bright was a practising barrister with connections to lunatic asylums, although fortunately not through personal experience. His father Dr John Bright played a significant role in the lunacy reforms of the early to mid-1840s and was also one of the doctors who in 1843 examined Daniel M'Naughten in the landmark case which led to the M'Naughten rule, in which a defendant who 'does not know right from wrong' may plead insanity as a defence. Another Inner Temple barrister with whom Henry Edgar was involved was John Carlen Heath. Henry, his younger brother Edward Thomas Austen and Heath were engaged in a conveyance of real property with the Cruikshank family of Southampton. In later years Heath assumed responsibility for the finances of John Hubback and is mentioned in the letters of Catherine Hubback while she was living in America.

One of the most significant relationships outside his family circle was Henry's friendship with John Hubback. It is not known exactly where or when John and Henry first met but by 1837 they both had chambers in 7 New Square, Lincoln's Inn. John was from a merchant family from Berwick-on-Tweed in Cumbria. His path into the Inner Temple had been more convoluted than Henry's more traditional route through Oxford: he studied Law at the University of London, and was apprenticed to a solicitor in Newcastle before he was admitted to the Inner Temple; nonetheless, he was a clever student and showed an early aptitude for law, winning prizes for his work. Perhaps it was this combination of determination and ability that first attracted Henry's notice. By the early 1840s it appears that John had been introduced at Portsdown Lodge, where he could be found participating

in family cricket matches. It was no doubt during these visits to the Austen home that he met the younger sister who was so much like his friend, and in 1842 he and Catherine married; thus, as well as being friends and colleagues, John and Henry became family. Further evidence of the depth of their friendship is found in the preface to a law treatise written by John in 1845: 'Amongst the friends to whom I'm indebted, I must name Mr Austen, of the Chancery Bar, without whose assistance, especially in the last part of the Treatise, the completion of it must have been still further deferred.' Unfortunately, the professional and family association did not bring the happiness that had probably been anticipated: Henry and John were to share one last connection that would bring only sadness and despair.

After six years of a marriage that included a household in London, dinner parties and balls, many of which included Henry, the Hubbucks' happy life began to erode. John began to show the first signs of mental instability which would rapidly escalate. By 1848, his mental state had deteriorated to such an extent that Catherine had to move the family to Malvern in hopes of a cure. With an unstable husband, two small children and a baby, this would have been a frightening and insecure time for her; her financial situation must have also become precarious as Henry transferred £400 of his own money, a considerable amount, into John's bank account at Praeds on 14 October.

The following year, 1849, brought no relief to Henry where his family were concerned. On 6 May, his sister Cassandra died from tuberculosis at the relatively young age of thirty-five; his uncle Henry's health was probably also deteriorating by this stage, as he too succumbed to illness in the early part of the following year. This was also a critical year for John's health. The Hubbucks travelled to South Wales in a desperate attempt to improve his condition; however, Catherine's hope of a cure 'from the sea breezes' proved to be a forlorn one. The despair of 1849 is echoed later in a dedication by Catherine to John's colleagues at the Chancery Bar which reads: 'To the members of the Chancery Bar in the year 1849, For kindness never to be forgotten, in the name of her husband, and in token of gratitude.' By early 1850 all hope of a normal life was gone and only the inevitable institutionalisation remained. This onerous task appears to have fallen to Henry, who, in May, met Catherine and John along the river Wye and then accompanied his friend to Westbrook House, a private lunatic asylum in Alton, while Catherine proceeded to Portsdown Lodge with her three young sons. Catherine noted the date 17 May 1850 alongside some woeful verses in her treasured copy of *The Christian Year*. How Henry must have felt at leaving John in such a place can only be imagined. At a later date John was transferred to Brislington asylum near Bristol, where he died of bronchitis in 1885, after 35 years in private lunatic asylums.

The final Christmas of Henry's life was spent at Portsdown Lodge. In the only known letter by him, he wrote to his cousin Anna, dated 28 January, and described a visit to London by his father earlier in the month; Frank would have been 80 years old by this time. He went on to discuss some financial matters concerning his cousin Cassandra Esten Austen, and appeared to be acting in a legal capacity

on her behalf. The letter is written in a relaxed and happy tone and includes a promise of calling on Anna's son Ben, who was living in London. Life appeared to be continuing as normal, with Frank expecting both Henry and his brother Edward for the coming Easter holidays at the beginning of April. Even Henry's financial records show little variation from the usual pattern of deposits and withdrawals. However, 27 May proved to be a dark day for the Austen family: Henry's younger brother George, a curate in Tidworth, lost his newborn baby daughter, and Henry himself was admitted to Sussex House Lunatic Asylum.

Thus, Henry's path led, as his friend John's had done only four years previously, to the doors of a private lunatic asylum. Sussex House was an establishment for 'gentlemen', where the middle and upper classes could place unfortunate members of their family beyond the public gaze. The relative comforts of such establishments must have seemed a world away from the brutal realities of a Bedlam; so discretion and succour were combined in one institution.



*Sussex House in 1841 Photographer: J.G. Kirby, 295 Edgware Road*

Sussex House, established by Dr Forbes Winslow in 1846, was situated on ten acres in Hammersmith, facing onto Fulham Palace Road. A contemporary description suggests a pleasant, informal atmosphere where patients were treated more like guests than inmates: 'The dining-room and parlour as well as the apartments of some of the patients overlook a beautiful lawn "shaven by the scythe and levelled by the roller," planted with flowers, shrubbery and trees – in short, an English garden ... An elegant parlour is open to them and they have the "liberty of the premises," much the same as if they were proprietors. Books, billiards and other sources of entertainment and amusement are at their service, and horses and carriages to give them – in the English phrase – "an airing".' Sussex House continued as a private asylum until 1888, when the lease expired and it was demolished to make way for housing development.

Dr Winslow came well recommended, as his contribution to the field of mental health and theories on the treatment of the insane were well known. Surprisingly for the times, Winslow had a rather compassionate attitude regarding the treatment of the mentally ill and stated that his objective was 'to carry out effectually, the social, kind and non-restraint treatment of the insane'. His numerous publications, including *The Anatomy of Suicide* (1840), *On The Plea of Insanity in Criminal*

*Cases* (1843), and *Lettsomian Lectures on Insanity* (1854), made him a leader in this field. Who recommended Sussex House is not known. But it is possible that, like John, Henry's colleagues at the Chancery Bar would have assisted in his hour of need; perhaps John Bright, colleague and previous occupant of 7 New Square, sought advice from his father Dr John Bright. It may have been Winslow's reputation as the acknowledged expert in the fields of lunacy and suicide which was the persuasive element, or the choice of Sussex House may have been nothing more than expedience, as it was located only three miles from Lincoln's Inn.

Some time on Saturday 21 October, Henry was found dead. The death registration entry states that the cause of death was strangulation and suffocation, which was clearly as a result of hanging, still among the most common forms of suicide, particularly for males. In 1854, however, suicide would not have been anticipated in Sussex House. The unexpected nature of Henry's death is reflected in the statistics for private asylums in 1854: at the end of 1854, Sussex House and its female equivalent, Brandenburgh House, had a total of 39 patients. Four deaths in total are recorded but only one is a suicide. By way of comparison, Westbrook House in Alton and Brislington House, near Bristol, record a combined total of five deaths and no suicides. Even the notorious public asylum Bethlehem Hospital, better known as Bedlam, recorded only one suicide amongst its 322 patients. Thus suicide in an asylum appears to have been an unusual event and as such required a coroner's inquest. The inquest into Henry's death was carried out but unfortunately the findings do not appear to have survived. It was conducted between Sunday 22nd and Monday 23rd by the coroner for Western Division Middlesex, Thomas Wakley M.P., who, like Winslow, was a progressive thinker for his day; he was elected to the office of coroner in 1836 and continued in the role until his death in 1862. Wakley was a medically qualified doctor who achieved lasting fame as the founder of the highly respected medical journal *The Lancet*. He had clear views regarding the coronial process and was a strong advocate for coroners being medically trained to best assess the cause of death. A description was provided by an admiring Charles Dickens, when he described him as 'nobly patient and humane', commending him for his sympathetic attitude; Dickens had been serving as a juryman for Wakley at an inquest into the death of an infant, thought to be caused by its mother, a young servant named Ann Spooner. It is likely that the inquest into Henry's unfortunate death was conducted with sensitivity and compassion.

Wakley's finding of 'mind unsound' at the time of his death meant that Henry could be buried with Christian funerary rites, which must have been a great relief to the deeply conservative and religious Austens. Not all coroners were so compassionate: if the verdict had been *felo de se*, the body would have been interred between the hours of nine and midnight in consecrated ground but without Christian rites; while deeply distressing, this was still more compassionate than the burial of a *felo de se* in Jane Austen's lifetime: until 1823, unless the coroner found the suicide's mind unsound, they were buried at busy crossroads at night and the body was secured with a stake.

The cause of Henry's suicide is unlikely to be ever known but it does, of course,

invite some speculation. It seems probable either that some sort of catastrophic event had occurred in his life in the May of 1854 or that a slow deterioration of his emotional state caused him to descend into a final suicidal despair. The catalyst for his initial admission into Sussex House may well have been a suicide attempt: this is supported by the fact that nothing appeared to be amiss in Henry's life as late as 30 March, when he was clearly expected for an Easter visit to Portsdown Lodge; yet less than eight weeks later, he was in an asylum. The short period of time from his admission to his death, 86 days compared to John's 35 years in Alton and Brislington, suggests that whatever was troubling him was acute and unconquerable.

Financially he appears to have been stable, as banking records show he had approximately £2,000 of assets at the time of his death and there are no unusual transactions leading up to May 1854. His letter to Anna in late January does not betray any unsoundness of mind or emotional agitation. He still appears to be an involved and active member of the family, as evidenced by his legal actions on behalf of his cousin Cassandra. Perhaps the events surrounding John's mental deterioration and even his own role in it may have weighed heavily on him. Certainly Catherine and her children were staring down a desolate future. Henry was supportive and helping where he could; his financial records show that he transferred over £77 to the Hubback account at Praeds between April 1850 and March 1851, and in the June of 1850 he paid £50 to Dr Burnett of Westbrook House, presumably for John's fees. As a result of these events, combined with an emotionally unfulfilling career and a personal life lacking in the consolation of a wife and children, he may have succumbed to a melancholic despair from which he could not recover.

Four days after his death, at 11am on a drizzling and overcast October day, he was buried in a private grave at Brompton cemetery. The ceremony was not carried out by a member of the family but by a local clergyman, the Revd Dr Butler, who presided over many of the burials there. Sometime later a headstone was erected. Today the gravestone is weathered and mostly illegible; however, a simple and rather generic epitaph providing only the bare facts of his life can be discerned: 'Henry Edgar Austen, Barrister [text unclear], of The Inner Temple, Second Son of Admiral Sir Francis W Austen.' His grave lies not far from the rotunda, near the southern gate. The choice of Brompton cemetery appears to have been based on a combination of proximity, it being only three miles from Sussex House, and propriety, as it was promoted as a place for 'gentleman' and the upper middle class. A cemetery burial for Henry was inevitable as London had become dangerously overcrowded with dead bodies, and burials in churchyards had ceased in the previous year. The Autumn of 1854 was also noted for a deadly cholera outbreak



*Henry Edgar Austen's grave at  
Brompton Cemetery*

and the pioneering work of John Snow in identifying the cause of the disease; within a few years, Snow himself would join Henry in Brompton Cemetery.

The aftermath of Henry's death must have caused shock and grief amongst his closest family, in particular his father and sister Catherine. Frank, having already experienced the loss of four children, would have been greatly affected; added to this, being a deeply religious man, he must have felt the stigma of suicide keenly. A letter written two years after Henry's death to Miss Quincy, in Boston, reveals his reluctance to approach the subject of suicide: 'Your sister will probably have told you, that the son whose address you furnished her with as a mean of enquiring respecting myself, was taken from this world in May 1854 after a short illness; and I may add that from his character and conduct since he arrived at manhood, I have the strongest assurance that he has a firm belief in the doctrines of our Holy Religion, passes to a happy Eternity. It is a solace to Parents when called to follow a child to the grave, to have such a hope, as I have respecting my departed son.' He seems to date the loss of Henry from the time he was admitted into the asylum rather than his actual death. It only remained for him to carry out the depressing task of attending to Henry's financial affairs; as he died intestate, administration of his estate fell to his father, who, on 17 November, closed the account at Hoares Bank and transferred the money to his own account.

Catherine, of course, had lost her dearest brother and greatest support. The circumstances of Henry's death must have also been a painful reminder of her own pitiful situation and raised her concerns for John's wellbeing. His cousin Anna recorded his passing in her pocketbook and James Edward Austen-Leigh's wife Emma lamented 'the death of poor Henry Austen'. Obituaries for Henry, including *The Times*, the *Law Magazine* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, are, as to be expected, all careful to avoid any mention of the unfortunate circumstances surrounding his death.

Three barristers who lived at 7 New Square all ended their lives in private lunatic asylums regardless of wealth, youth or brilliancy. The paths of these three gentlemen could not have been more different: John Hubback was a brilliant man with a descent into a psychotic type of illness lasting several years; Jodrell-Phillips was an elderly man with presumably senile dementia, whose vast wealth and landed estates necessitated legal action for the estates to function; whereas Henry Edgar Austen may have suffered from a more fragile nature, which had carefully hidden a melancholic despair. All three men did, however, have options which would have not been available in Jane Austen's lifetime. Jane's uncle Thomas and brother George were placed with the Cullum family at Monk Sherborne, where they were presumably well looked after; the institutions of the day were simply not an option. By the 1840s changes in the law meant that the care of lunatics and imbeciles were regulated; many (but not all) of the private lunatic asylums were run by medically trained men who sought to cure and help rather than simply incarcerate their patients. Those born gentlemen maintained their status, regardless of their mental state, albeit at a price.

Of Jane's thirty-three nieces and nephews, only two died of something other



than natural causes. Ironically both were named Henry and died exactly, to the day, three years apart. Henry, Charles's son, died from an accident at the young age of 25 years. Although he died of natural causes, Edward's son Henry, born an Austen, also died at the relatively young age of 46, in 1843. But perhaps the Henry curse began with their Uncle Henry Thomas, who suffered the death of his first wife and became lamentably bankrupt at 45, before he died at the age of 78. If Jane Austen had survived into old age, what kind of relationship might have existed between her and Henry? Would she have found his poems amusing, perhaps even encouraged his literary attempts? What sort of correspondence might have sprung up between Jane, Catherine and Henry? Given her engaging and frequent letters to Anna and Fanny it is enticing to imagine what kind of delightful exchanges might have occurred. With Henry's legal background and situation in London, would he have been able to liaise with publishers on her behalf, in much the same way as his Uncle Henry had done almost half a century before? It is probably reasonable to suspect that if she had lived longer, Jane would have liked Henry, given his love of the written word and his suggested similarity to Henry Thomas, generally thought to be her favourite brother. Finally, it is tempting to imagine Henry, during one of his trips to the Quarter Sessions, in Winchester, making the easy walk from the County Hall to Winchester Cathedral, where he could pay his respects to the aunt from his childhood, who brought such 'peculiar pleasures' – the aunt who would have been so saddened by the fulfilment of her unfortunate prophecy.

#### Notes

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*The authors would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following people: Deirdre Le Faye; Hammersmith & Fulham Archives and Local History Centre: Anne Wheeldon; Hampshire Record Office: Carol Linton; Hoare's Bank: Pamela Hunte; Jane Austen's House Museum: Louise West; The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple: Celia Pilkington; The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn: Guy Holburn; Brompton Cemetery: Jay Roos; Ronald Dunning.*

## *Lunaticks, boys' toys and heroines*

Alan Thwaite

As an alternative to 'Lunaticks, Boys' Toys and Heroines' the title could be 'Did Jane Austen wear knickers?' – a serious question, all to do with fashion which will be dealt with towards the end of this paper.

Two definitions of culture are applicable to this discussion: 'manifestations of intellectual achievement' and 'the customs of a particular time' and, with these in mind, I ask you to think about your own life; what was it like when you were young compared with now? What material goods, possessions and domestic gadgets were available to you, how did you travel, how did you communicate, how did you see films or get news? How has your life changed? Whatever the answer, bear it in mind and compare it with the period taken for the purpose of this paper, the ninety years from 1730 to 1820. This includes the birth of George Austen in 1731 and Jane Austen's death in 1817. The broad areas covered are intellectual developments stemming from a particular group of individuals, aspects of art, women's achievements and innovations and discoveries leading to change in the industrial and domestic worlds. The dramatic changes that took place were largely the result of thought and activity by people with a practical and philosophical turn of mind who were interested in the natural world. A significant number were born between 1730 and 1745 and they were in their stride by the 1760s and at their peak in Jane Austen's lifetime.

We start in Lichfield, from 1757 the home of Dr Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802). He was born in the same year as George Austen and studied mathematics at Cambridge then medicine in Edinburgh. His house on Beacon Street, which backs





*Fig. 3 The Iron Forge by Joseph Wright (1734-97)*



*Fig. 4 Statue of Joseph Priestley, Leeds*



*Fig. 5 Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817)*



*Fig. 6 Caroline Herschel (1750-1848)*



*Fig. 7 Jane Marcet (1769–1858)*



*Fig. 8 Argand Lamp*

on to the Cathedral close, is now a museum with a botanical garden, a legacy of his great interest in and work on plants. Apart from this and his work as a physician, Darwin invented machines, such as a horizontal windmill for grinding clay for Josiah Wedgwood, and also wrote much poetry. *The Botanic Garden* (1791) included 'The Loves of the Plants', a poem considered too sexually explicit by many of his day. He also reckoned to travel 10,000 miles a year – a modern car-mileage figure – a good reason to want more comfortable carriages. To his own he added springs and improved the steering so that it would take corners of smaller radius with less chance of overturning.

Shortly after arriving in Lichfield, Darwin met the son of his patient Mrs Boulton; his name was Matthew. The two men had similar interests and became lifelong friends. Their association led to connections and friendships with others with inquisitive, enquiring minds. These included Josiah Wedgwood (Charles Darwin's other grandfather), James Watt, Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Joseph Priestley; they and others formed an informal group, which ironically called itself 'Lunaticks'. Early meetings were at the house of Darwin or Boulton, which meant travelling over poor, unlit roads so they chose the first Monday of the month nearest the full moon. In the early days they called themselves the *Lunar Circle* but changed it to the *Lunar Society of Birmingham* in 1775. The number of 'Lunar Men' varied and is not clearly defined, but the core comprised fourteen, of whom eleven became Fellows (FRS) of *The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge* (simply, The Royal Society).<sup>1</sup>

Turnpike trusts were created late in the seventeenth century for the purposes of improving the quality of roads but only 150 existed in 1750 and good-surface mileage was small; travel was still difficult. By 1772 a further 400 were established and by 1800 the number was over 700, a dramatic improvement. When Jane Austen died, about 18,000 miles (29,000 km) of road in England and Wales were turnpiked. With Darwin's encouragement, Edgeworth built on his friend's carriage improvements to such an extent that he was rewarded with the Royal Society's gold medal. With better roads and improved carriages John Palmer thought it time to improve the postal service. Dismayed at the unreliability which existed in 1780, he persuaded the prime minister to permit an experiment on the Bath to London route with a timetabled mail service; it was a great success and, from 1784, was rapidly introduced across the country. The benefits were real in a number of ways: replies to letters 'by return' became possible, which meant rapid transmission of information, especially important to the philosophers with all of their new ideas, innovations, discoveries and experimental results; at the same time it brought social benefits to people like the Austens – we know that Jane wrote and received quick replies to her correspondence. The coaches also provided a fast, regular service on which to travel.

When reading Jane Austen's letters and novels we quickly find ourselves in a world inhabited by numerous real and imaginary clergymen, all of the established faith. The Lunar Men were not like that; most, if not all, were dissenters. Certainly dissenters in the general sense, some were atheist. Priestley, Wedgwood and the

Quaker gun-maker Samuel Galton strongly advocated the abolition of slavery and many of the group and their associates supported the French Revolution. These views had a number of effects: being barred from attending Oxford and Cambridge universities was one (Darwin must have kept his views quiet until later in life). Another was that they were free to think however they wished, without the conventions of the academic and aristocratic establishments and the recognised church to confine their ideas. They wanted to and did discuss their notions widely with other natural philosophers in these islands, in France, Germany and Sweden. They experimented in front of a public which was interested and prepared to challenge them. They disseminated rather than confined their ideas, in contrast to the noble and rich who thought such a prerogative was theirs. The time was ripe for establishing other bodies; the first of the new literary and philosophical societies was formed in Manchester in 1781, followed by Derby Philosophical Society in 1783 (after Darwin moved there) and in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1793. The last, today, is the largest independent library outside London.<sup>2</sup>

Matthew Boulton's (1728–1809) background was different from Darwin's. He was an apprentice in his father's manufactory of small goods near Birmingham. An enthusiastic man of ideas and great entrepreneurial spirit, he was keen to see manufacturing and marketing as complementary and essential bedfellows. He demonstrated this in designing, making and selling buckles to the French when he was only seventeen. He was soon in charge of his father's business, and rapid development took place. Many of the goods he made used iron and, particularly, steel which was 'cut', rather like cut-glass. High quality was needed; this required supplies of coal for conversion to coke in order to reach the high temperatures required for rapid iron production and its conversion to steel.

Coal mines needed to be drained efficiently. Boulton heard about a mathematical instrument-maker at Glasgow University who had modified a model steam engine made by Thomas Newcomen, maker of the first practical engine in 1712. He was James Watt (1736–1819), a somewhat dour, pessimistic but brilliant engineer. The two met in the late 1760s and formed their famous steam engine company at Soho, Birmingham in 1775. Three times more efficient than Newcomen's engines, Boulton and Watt's machines were soon being sent around Britain and abroad. Early engines were small and only used for pumping water; later, larger engines were not only of practical use for pumping and driving mills but had features of classical architecture, with Corinthian-like columns. Their dramatic movement is some of the best 'dynamic art' to be seen. The world's oldest working engine from Boulton and Watt's inauguration year is in Birmingham; others can be seen elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

Other early uses were in breweries and for domestic water supplies. Water companies were beginning to install iron pipes, at Green Park, Bath, for example, in the 1790s. A stand-pipe with a screw-down tap (a cock) made indoor water supply possible. Thomas Rowlandson had fun with this idea in a risqué cartoon: an attractive buxom girl stands at a spraying tap, the plumber is immediately behind her with his necessary equipment to the ready while the girl's mother glares and



grimaces at this juxtaposition; the title is *A new Cock wanted—or—Work for the Plumber*.

Fashion was set by the *ton* or ‘the World’, the ultra-fashionable people who decided whether a play was a success, an artist a genius, or what colour would be ‘in’ that season. They determined what was or was not acceptable. Boulton made sure that the aristocracy would take this view of his wares and that the wider market of the upper and middle classes would follow. He was keen to make goods of the highest quality and in great numbers; he did so, half a million in 1780, for example.<sup>4</sup> Wedgwood was even more of that mind. The men were competitors but realised each needed the other’s goods and expertise; though not in formal partnership they worked together and cooperated greatly in achieving the pinnacle of providing goods to the British court and others. Many of Boulton’s goods were ‘toys’ – ‘Birmingham toys’, that is a multitude of small, decorative personal accessories such as ‘Enamelled brooches, Buttons, Buckles, Snuff-boxes, Belt Locks, Cane Heads, Instrument Cases, Trinketts, Tapestry Hooks ... Watch Hooks & Keys’. Many of these were specifically for decorating and enhancing clothes, shoes and other items worn or carried by men – the ‘Boys’ Toys’. Wedgwood jasper-ware was incorporated in some of Boulton’s best work [fig. 1]. *Sketchley’s Birmingham Directory* of 1767 lists 100 firms in the ‘toy’ and related trades; Boulton’s was the biggest, with the greatest range. Boulton’s new ‘Manufactory and Royal Mint Offices’, built between 1762 and 1764, were at Soho, Handsworth, outside Birmingham, where Boulton had built a house c.1757. The *Travel Journal* of Jabez Maud Fisher, August 1776 says: ‘The Front of ... [Soho Manufactory] is like the stately Palace of some Duke. Within it is divided into hundreds of little apartments all of which like Bee hives are crowded with the Sons of Industry ... The very air buzzes with the variety of noises.’ This manner of working was based on Adam Smith’s ‘division of labour’ principle and Boulton’s example was taken up by Josiah Wedgwood when he built his new works at Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent, which opened in 1769.<sup>5</sup>

Wedgwood (1730–1795) [fig. 2] contracted smallpox as a boy which meant that he could not use a potter’s ‘kick wheel’ without help. He took up designing pots but, more importantly, carried out over 5,000 experiments in order to develop, improve and create better clays and glazes. These required accurate temperature measurements and, in recognition of inventing the pyrometer, he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society. His results were recorded in an experiment book, many entries being made by his wife, Sarah (called Sally). Wedgwood’s aim was to be the best and to sell to the best, something he managed, having ‘received a commission to make an elaborate tea service in green and gold Creamware for Queen Charlotte’, and being allowed to call it ‘Queen’s ware’. Wedgwood is credited with being one of, if not the first to sell by ‘direct mail’, provide self-service, free delivery; and ‘in a daring and ultimately successful experiment in inertia selling, unsolicited parcels of ware were sent to many of the noble houses of Germany in the hope of attracting orders and advertising the quality of the goods’.<sup>6</sup>

In 1762 Wedgwood was introduced to a man experienced in commerce, Thomas

Bentley (1730–80). The two got on well from the start and set up a partnership which resulted in Bentley running the London Soho works and the shop in York Street, St James's Square. It was here that the Austens' purchase of Wedgwood ware was made.<sup>7</sup> Jane said, 'I believe the pattern is a small Lozenge in purple, between Lines of narrow gold;--& it is to have the Crest'.<sup>8</sup> The shop's success was such that it was decided to open another in Bath. A manager was required. Bentley married Hannah Oates of Sheffield, whose sister, Ann, married a London haberdasher, William Ward; he was just the man for the job. At about the time Ward was appointed, his young daughter, also Ann, stayed with her uncle Thomas; she rejoined her parents in Bath, but it is not known whether she worked in the shop. What definitely is known is that she married a man called William Radcliffe and took up writing novels.

In contrast to lozenges and lines of gold, pottery of this time began to have decoration showing country and industrial scenes. Wedgwood made a plaque showing his new house, Etruria Hall, and the Trent and Mersey Canal. He had vigorously supported the construction of the canal, seeing it as a better, more reliable, less damaging way of transporting his goods. What he omitted from view was his manufactory; he wished to be seen as a man of taste and showing pottery kilns would not help that. However, the Coalport Pottery is shown on a Coalport vase of later date (c.1810–14). The artist Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–97) was really the man who drew attention to the work of the natural philosophers. He had spent time studying the way Caravaggio and the Dutch masters used light and his laboratory and workshop scenes demonstrate this; example are his paintings of *The Alchymist*, and *The Iron Forge* [fig. 3]. More particularly, he accurately shows actual equipment and apparatus used, unlike earlier depictions showing philosophers trying to turn base materials into gold. Other artists, among them Philipp Jakob Louthembourg and Paul Sandby Munn, created dramatic landscape views of industry, while William Williams shows an interesting, almost bucolic rolling countryside contrasted with distant pools, buildings and coke-hearths with their associated columns of smoke.

In his experiments, Wedgwood relied on information and help from Lunar and other friends today called chemists. In return he provided them with vessels for their experiments; Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) was one [fig. 4]. He discovered oxygen (though it was the brilliant Frenchman Antoine Lavoisier who called it that), synthesized nitrous oxide (laughing-gas), and was the first producer of carbonated-water. Brought up a Calvinist, he strongly advocated toleration of dissenters, set up the Unitarian church, and, as already mentioned, supported the French Revolution. These views did not endear him either to the establishment or to many of the people; as a result his house, including his laboratory and philosophical papers, was burnt by rioters on the second anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. Wedgwood offered him accommodation but Priestley moved, briefly, nearer to London and then emigrated to America, where he died. It was a time when views of the kind held by Priestley, the Lunar men in general and close friends of that circle like Thomas Beddoes, worried those of the established order. The landed

aristocracy saw a vision of increasingly wealthy industrialists and entrepreneurial upstarts exceeding their status and Edmund Burke held that 'capitalism should be subordinate to the medieval social tradition and that the business class should be subordinate to aristocracy.'<sup>9</sup> Wedgwood was another at the top of the hit-list.

Watt also supplied equipment to others, one being his friend Thomas Beddoes (1760–1808) who was also a friend of Darwin. It was Darwin who, in 1787, suggested that Lichfield Lunar man (but Bath-born) Richard Edgeworth, should take his son Lovell to Bristol for a possible cure for tuberculosis. Beddoes was enthusiastically experimenting with 'factitious airs' (any chemically produced gas) including oxygen, hydrogen and nitrous oxide in the hope of finding such a cure and offering it widely.<sup>10</sup> To this end he had set up a Preventive Medical Institution for the Sick and Drooping Poor in Hotwells where he treated patients without charge; his assistant was the young Humphry Davy. Edgeworth took his family there and it is reported that his children took to Dr Beddoes and enjoyed seeing his experiments and hearing his stories. One in particular must have been struck by the doctor, though it seems something of a mismatch occurred. In 1794 at thirty-three, the 'short, fat and famously gawkish' and 'asthmatic atheist' Beddoes persuaded the 'thin, energetic, talkative – and dazzlingly pretty – 22-year-old Anna-Maria Edgeworth' to accept his hand in marriage.<sup>11</sup> The clever, appealingly attractive Humphry Davy was grateful for opportunities Beddoes gave him. One, unwittingly, was some form of close relationship with Anna – he at least held her hand – and they corresponded over a long period, even after Davy left for London and the Royal Institution.

The Royal Institution in Albemarle Street, on the opposite side of Piccadilly from Wedgwood's shop in York Street, was founded in 1799 by Joseph Banks, Henry Cavendish and Benjamin Thompson (Count Rumford). It was and is the foremost of the philosophical societies referred to earlier and has always been a place where the public could go to hear talks and see demonstrations, such as today's Christmas Lectures, in line with the ideals of dissemination of information held by the Lunar Men. This is where Davy really made his mark. Eventually he became president of the older and more prestigious Royal Society. Jane Marcet was one visitor who saw him, but she does not mention nitrous oxide, which by 1799 had become a favourite party amusement with aristocrats as a 'recreational drug'. Gilray parodies this in his cartoon of a Royal Institution event, 'Scientific Researches! New Discoveries in PNEUMATICS!' At these parties the gas was inhaled and its effects experienced: Davy described them as 'thrillings', with 'increased body heat, giddiness, raised pulse rate, facial flushing and sometimes dancing and laughing round the room – exquisitely pleasurable'.<sup>12</sup>

Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744–1817) was a man with a lively, gregarious nature and enthusiasm for everything, including marriage [fig. 5]. He was procreator *par excellence* of the Lunar Men, marrying four times and producing twenty-two children. Maria and Anna arrived soon after his elopement with Anna Maria Elers (1743–73). Perhaps having so many children caused him to look for suitable books for their education. He found none that gave a satisfactory introduction to natural

philosophy for those aged between four and ten so, being a natural educator, he determined to write some. His real support was his second wife, Honora Sneyd (1752–80), whom he first met in Lichfield. She was eager to help and took the task seriously, recording in a systematic way what children learnt and at what age. She was the first to establish that ‘the art of education should be considered as an experimental science’. Richard and Honora thought ‘that Children’s books should be fun, to keep their attention, and with crystal-clear familiar objects.’<sup>13</sup> Sadly, Honora died before the project was finished and her sister, Elizabeth (1759–97), Richard’s third wife, was apparently not interested but his daughter Maria was. She worked to finish the project, which took over twenty-two years, and then wrote her own books for children, including *Early Lessons* and *Moral Tales* (both 1801). Her father’s fourth wife, her third step-mother Frances Beaufort (1769–1857), was sister to Francis, who defined the Beaufort wind scale. Francis was not only a brother-in-law to Richard but Maria’s (step) brother-in-law as well; Francis married Honora, another of Richard’s daughters.

This brings us to other ‘heroines’; the wives of a number of the Lunar Men are some who should be thought of as such. Annie Watt not only did the domestic jobs but was a capable assistant, dealing with technical letters in the family’s bleaching business. Sally Wedgwood, as we have seen, was involved with the recording of experimental information, and Mary Priestley provided washtubs for chemical experiments and kept mice ready for Joseph’s experiments on them with his factitious airs.

Across the Channel, Lavoisier, who had met and discussed experiments and gases with Priestley, married Marie Anne Paulze (1758–1836). She was clever, technically gifted, able to draw scientific equipment accurately following art lessons from Jacques-Louis David and gave every-day laboratory assistance to her husband. She also did all in her power, unsuccessfully, to save him from ‘Madame Guillotine’. Following his beheading in 1794 she published his work. Her second marriage, to Count Rumford, was less successful: it lasted only about a year.

The foremost women of the age were Hannover-born Caroline Herschel (1750–1848) and a Scot, Mary Fairfax (1780–1872) from Fife.<sup>14</sup> Caroline, sister of Sir William Herschel (1738–1822) was the first woman in Britain to be paid for scientific work [fig. 6]. King George III provided her with an annual pension of £50 in recognition of her support of her brother in discovering Uranus, her own discoveries of eight comets and for correcting errors in the star-tables used by the Greenwich observatory for aiding ship navigation. Further recognition came in the form of a gold medal from the Royal Astronomical Society in 1828 (when she was 78 years old). Seven years later, with Mary (Fairfax) Somerville, she became an honorary member of the Society and at the age of 96 the King of Prussia gave her a gold medal for science.

Mary Fairfax had little formal education. She spent just one year at school then educated herself through her own determination. She was bent on acquiring a copy of Euclid’s *Elements of Geometry*, and did, but there was much family reproach, especially from her mother, who instructed the servants to remove the candles from

Mary's bedroom so that she could not study at night. She had no more promising support from her cousin Samuel Grieg, whom she married in 1804. He was a man who 'possessed in full the prejudice against learned women'. Three years later he died and Mary experienced both grief and relief. Fortunately he left an inheritance which enabled her to pursue her interests and look after their two children. In 1812 she married another cousin, surgeon William Somerville, who was entirely supportive of her work and, conveniently, bought a London house near the Royal Institution, the library of which she used. She published a number of extremely well received mathematical and other works of great clarity but it was the lucid translation of Pierre-Simon Laplace's *Mécanique Céleste* in 1831 which brought her acclaim; it was used as a textbook for Cambridge University mathematics students. Her prodigious mathematical talents were complemented by 'her modest, polite, zealously self-motivated personality.'<sup>15</sup> Somerville College, Oxford (1879) is her monument.

Let us now consider our seventh heroine, Lord Byron's only legitimate daughter, Augusta Ada (1815–1852). In complete contrast to the attitude of Mrs Fairfax and her family to Mary's education, Lady Mary Anne Milbank encouraged her daughter Ada wholeheartedly. Accomplished in philosophy and mathematics herself, she was determined that her daughter should not follow the lifestyle of her father. Ada was, therefore, introduced to mathematics very early in her life. She married William King, later Earl of Lovelace. Though there is not space to develop her story here, it is worth recording that she lived in St James's Square, also within a stone's throw of the Royal Institution. She corresponded with Mary Somerville and it is probable that this led to Ada meeting Charles Babbage; she is recognised particularly for her theoretical work on his 'calculating engine', the result being the world's first computer program. In recognition, an *Ada Lovelace Day* has been created (apparently of variable date) and the United States Department of Defense [*sic*] named their computer software language 'Ada' in her honour.<sup>16</sup>

Our last heroine here is of more ordinary stature but none the less worthy. She is Jane Marcet (1769–1858) [fig. 7], who heard Sir Humphry Davy's discourses at the Royal Institution lectures. She was educated with her brothers, and through her husband, a Swiss physician, she met many leading scientists. She was also a friend of Maria Edgeworth, who described the Marcets' home as full of lively, intelligent children where visitors were welcome. Though not noted for original scientific ideas of her own, she wrote books on chemistry, botany, religion and economics in the form of conversations. Those on natural philosophy are between a Mrs Bryant and pupils Caroline and Emily. Published anonymously in 1805 as *Conversations on Chemistry* they became immediately popular, eventually running to sixteen editions in England. Her books, though written for girls, were also read by boys and adults, one avid reader being the young printer's apprentice Michael Faraday (1791–1867), whose laboratory is preserved in the Royal Institution.

Having considered intellectual achievements by individuals, many of which had an immediate effect on the general populace, it is time to look at other matters that changed aspects of life during the ninety years from 1730. One was the

availability of news and its distribution: newspapers such as the *Bath Chronicle* from 1760 and *The Daily Universal Register* from 1785 (which three years later was renamed *The Times*) provided information, much of it advertising; these were available for perusal by the general public in coffee shops. Another was the improvement of transport. Apart from road developments, a large mileage of narrow canals had been built with Birmingham at the hub. They reached ports at Bristol and London, were able to carry large loads, were relatively unaffected by bad weather and gave smooth passage to fragile goods. From 1804, with Richard Trevithick's invention of the steam locomotive, railways rapidly developed: boats had used steam-propulsion from the 1780s. These developments affected imports and exports. Mills in the north were able to take the raw material and, with the invention of James Hargreaves' spinning jenny, Richard Arkwright's water-frame, Samuel Crompton's mule and Jedediah Strutt's circular seam-free stocking machine, good high-quality cloth could be made faster and cheaper. The Empire line muslins would not have been there in quantity in the 1790s without these. Domestic water supply companies were formed and piped water was taken directly into houses, avoiding the need to go to a communal pump. For example, 'An Act of 1766 gave power to the city [Bath] to provide fresh water from the springs ... up to two miles from the city centre including a right to enter private ground.' The pipes and pumping-engines belonged to the city.<sup>17</sup>

Medicine did not make such fast progress; Wedgwood had the lower part of his right leg amputated without anaesthetic in 1768;<sup>18</sup> and Fanny Burney, in a long letter to her sister Hetty (Esther), gives a gruesome account of a right-breast mastectomy while fully conscious, listening to the blade scraping her ribs on 30 September 1811. Davy had missed or dismissed the possibility of nitrous oxide being used as an anaesthetic, something that did not happen until 1844, when it was used in dentistry; ether was used in other medicine from 1846.<sup>19</sup> Curing disease was different. Smallpox killed about a fifth of those who contracted it. Lady Mary Wortley Montague took the dramatic step of inoculating, by 'variolation', her three-year-old son in 1716, and records at Coram's Foundling Hospital show this was routine procedure there from 1744. It was another half-century before the first smallpox serum was produced by Dr Edward Jenner.

We turn now to houses and domestic articles. Only about ten per cent of Georgians bought their own house. Those that did bought a shell to fit out as they wished, usually using pattern-books to help them choose their cornices, dado rails, ceiling-roses and other permanent fittings, rather as ladies used pattern-books for clothes. Those who bought property before the 1790s may well have wanted a fashion-change; new fireplaces became the rage by the end of that decade. Benjamin Thompson had a lifelong interest in matters to do with heat and he was given the title Count Rumford for, among other things, providing thermal underwear and cooking stoves to the Bavarian army; Georgian cooks may well have had one of his new double boilers or a kitchen range and, from 1799, enamel kitchen utensils to go with them. It was his fireplace, however, that made his name a household word in England. He designed one with inclined side-walls and a forward-sloping back

in order to throw heat out into the room more efficiently than previous designs had done. Additionally he narrowed the throat, causing air, and therefore the smoke, to travel more effectively and quickly up the chimney; it could also be regulated. The result was that many old fireplaces were replaced by a 'Rumford'. In *Northanger Abbey* we read Catherine's thoughts as she arrives there: 'An abbey! Yes, it was delightful ... The furniture was in all the profusion and elegance of modern taste ... The fireplace, where she had expected the ample width and ponderous carving of former times, was contracted to a Rumford, with slabs of plain though handsome marble, and ornaments over it of the prettiest English china.'<sup>20</sup>

Lady Caroline Lennox provides us with a good reason to 'shop until we drop'; she declared that shopping was not only fun but was a 'rational exercise, a commitment to the civilising powers of trade'. Choosing wallpapers or paints would be one necessary activity. Newly available, more permanent pigments derived from the work of chemists and based on the newly found elements such as chromium (for yellows and oranges) and arsenic (for brilliant but poisonous greens) became available. Yellow walls, at one time unthinkable, became the fashion once chinoiserie became the rage.

Candles were still required but, after the mid-1780s, in the best rooms, you might have got rid of your ordinary oil-lamps and replaced them with elegant Sheffield (silver) plate Argand lamps, which used more air and burned more brightly – affordable because most of it was made of copper [fig. 8]. You would upgrade your piano to a Broadwood, with its much stronger frame, more keys and faster escape mechanisms. Five-octave pianos were the largest available in the 1780s but by 1810 they had six, and another octave was added ten years later. If you were lucky, one might arrive as a gift:

Mrs. Cole was telling that she had been calling on Miss Bates, and as soon as she entered the room had been struck by the sight of a pianoforte – a very elegant looking instrument – not a grand, but a large-sized square pianoforte; ... this pianoforte had arrived from Broadwood's ... to the great astonishment of both aunt and niece--entirely unexpected; ... Jane herself was quite at a loss, ...<sup>21</sup>

A girl, in her economically produced, machine- instead of hand-printed multi-coloured cotton or muslin dress (1785), might sit at the piano and make notes of the fingering with a newly invented graphite-clay pencil (1791). We can imagine an evening with Mr Bennet, relaxed in his library, in a comfortable chair before his new 'Rumford', reading *The Times* using his recent bi-focal lens spectacles and drinking coffee from his new Rumford percolator. Perhaps it would spoil the picture to think of him with false teeth made from Wedgwood porcelain (1791).

There is more shopping to do: 'at about ten in the morning Merchant's wives, gentlemen and ladies of fashion set out for the shops. They went ... to buy wall coverings or cloth, to the jewellers of New Bond Street and Hatton Garden, the drapers and lacemen near Covent Garden and the book and print sellers of the

Strand, St James's and Ludgate Hill'.<sup>22</sup> If it was after 1806, they may also have gone to Schomberg House in Pall Mall and bought material for pantaloons or even ready-made ones. A version of this article of clothing transferred from the male to the female wardrobe at this time, the main difference being that the ladies' version was open at the crotch. So, did Jane Austen wear 'knickers' – or pantaloons? We shall never know, but my answer is that she probably did. Since she described a wide range of clothing materials and items in her letters to Cassandra, it is quite possible that she mentioned these new undergarments in letters destroyed by her sister; they were quite clearly items of fashion. From 1812 straight-legged drawers were worn; they were trimmed with tucks, lace and broderie anglaise and until 1820 were visible under shorter skirts. Lord Byron writing about Lady Caroline Lamb on 2 July 1814 states, 'Not all I could say could prevent her from displaying her green pantaloons every now & then'.<sup>23</sup> They were out of fashion by 1840. As one writer puts it, they were convenient for calls of nature 'out the back' or in the 'cold, Delft-tiled reaches of an up-to-date water closet'. Alexander Cummings invented the S-bend water-closet in 1785, and three years later it was so much improved by Joseph Bramah (who also invented burglar-proof locks, the beer-pump and the fountain-pen) that 6,000 were sold in the next twenty years. These large installations, with handle, balance-weight and springs as well as porcelain bowls made by Wedgwood and many other potters, were not bettered for almost a hundred years. Conveniently, that shown here, an example in York Castle Museum, was made about 1820.



So here we end. Over these ninety years the ways of thinking about natural materials and their uses, inventions and discoveries, improved travel and transport, desirable goods at reasonable prices, attitudes towards education and dissention in religion affected everyone. Manufacturing procedures influenced how people worked and produced goods: they also changed domestic life. There is no doubt



that great cultural changes took place from the time George Austen was born until his famous daughter died.

### Notes

- 1 The Royal Society, <<http://royalsociety.org>>, accessed 27 February 2011.
- 2 The Lit & Phil [sic], 23 Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1SE.
- 3 Working examples of their and other makers linear and rotative engines can be seen at Thinktank, Birmingham's Museum of Science (The Smethwick Engine); Crofton, near Marlborough; the Kew Steam Museum, London; Papplewick near Nottingham and Ryhope near Sunderland.
- 4 Amanda Vickery, *How the Georgians Lived*, BBC Channel Four, 2010 (based on her book *Behind Closed Doors*).
- 5 J Bisset, *Bisset's Magnificent Guide or Grand Copper Plate Directory for the Town of Birmingham*, Birmingham (1808); Wedgwood, Josiah (1730–1795), *ODNB*.
- 6 *ODNB*, Wedgwood, Josiah (1730–1795).
- 7 Now on display at Jane Austen's House Museum, Chawton, Hampshire.
- 8 Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen's Letters*, OUP (1997), Letter 88, 18 September 1813.
- 9 M. Morton Auerbach, *The Conservative Illusion*, Columbia University Press (1959), p. 40.
- 10 'Factitious air n. any kind of gas or vapour produced in a chemical experiment' (*OED*).
- 11 Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder*, Harper Press (2008), p. 253.
- 12 *Ibid*, pp. 259–60.
- 13 Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men*, Faber and Faber, pbk (2003), p. 316.
- 14 Mary Fairfax was born at her aunt's house in Jedburgh but the family home was in Burntisland, Fife.
- 15 Martha Somerville, *Personal Recollections from Early Life to Old Age of Mary Somerville*. Boston: Roberts Brothers (1874), via The Collective Biographies of Women: Biographies, <<http://womensbios.lib.virginia.edu>>, accessed 10 February 2011.
- 16 Ada Lovelace Day 2011 is on 7 October.
- 17 Alan Hardiman, *Servicing the Houses of Bath*, Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society, Journal 27, p. 12.
- 18 Letter in Wedgwood's hand, Wedgwood Museum reference: 18199.25 1768, , <<http://www.wedgwoodmuseum.org.uk>>, accessed 10 February 2011.
- 19 BOC Healthcare, History of Anaesthesia, <<http://www.bochealthcare.co.uk>>; accessed 10 February 2011.
- 20 *Northanger Abbey*, V.II, Ch.V.
- 21 *Emma*, Vol. II. Ch.VIII.
- 22 Tillyard, *Aristocrats*, Vintage, London (1995), p. 171.
- 23 Peter Quennell, Byron: *A Self-Portrait, Letters and Diaries 1798–1824*, John Murray, London (1950), Vol. I, p. 264).

## 1797: the Austens at war

Clive Caplan



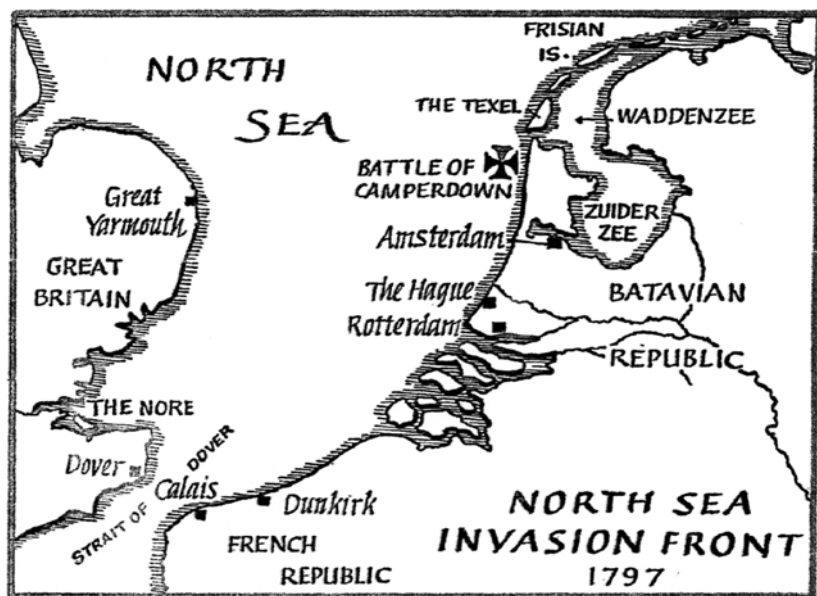
*The Return of the Fleet to Great Yarmouth in 1797*

1797 was a year of highs and lows in the British war with Revolutionary France, and a year of event for the Austen family, whose fortunes mingled with those of the nation. Actively involved in the war effort were Jane Austen's brothers in uniform: Frank and Charles in the Navy, and Henry in the Militia. The year has been rendered somewhat obscure for us by the absence of any surviving letters from Jane Austen herself, but the letters for the period of Eliza de Feuillide, Jane's cousin, are a valuable resource.

On the next-to-last day of the old year (30 December 1796) Eliza wrote to her cousin and frequent correspondent Philadelphia (Phylly) Walter about James, the Austens' eldest sibling: 'Has Cassandra informed You of the Wedding which is soon to take place in the family? James has chosen a second Wife' (*Outlandish Cousin*, p. 134). The wedding of Jane's sister Cassandra was expected to follow in the spring, but alas she was fated to live out her life in the role of a war widow, for her fiancé died while on an expedition to the West Indies. Writing again on 3 May 1797 Eliza had to report: 'I have just received a letter from Steventon where they are all in great Affliction ... for the death of Mr. Fowle, The Gentleman to whom our Cousin Cassandra was engaged ... a very severe stroke to the whole family' (*Outlandish Cousin*, p. 138).

At this time Henry's regiment, the Oxfordshire Militia, was a part of the defence force of East Anglia. His corps had spent the previous summer in Great Yarmouth, the naval base for Admiral Duncan's North Sea Fleet, had wintered in Colchester, and on 13 May 1797 proceeded to Norwich. One detachment

again went to Yarmouth and another to the Landguard Fort, which guarded the approaches to Harwich harbour. The East coast was under threat from a combined French and Dutch expeditionary force based on the Texel, while Norwich itself was full of agitators, riotous behaviour and the disaffected trying to tamper with the allegiance of the troops. Regimental responsibilities lay particularly heavily on Henry Austen. Already paymaster, he had assumed the duties of adjutant on 18 February and was promoted to captain-lieutenant on 29 March; he had become responsible for the finances of his unit, its internal regulation, and for the training and integration of a flood of new recruits.



Frank Austen was first lieutenant of *Triton* (32 guns), a frigate attached to the Channel Fleet based at Spithead. His ship was away, cruising in the Channel, when on 15 April mutiny broke out in the Spithead fleet. The crews flew a red flag as a symbol of revolution and refused to go to sea until their demands were met for an increase in pay and for the removal of unpopular officers. The mutiny spread to the Nore anchorage in the Thames Estuary, and then, to complete the catastrophe, to the ships of the North Sea Fleet at Great Yarmouth, which sailed off to the Nore to join their fellow mutineers. Admiral Duncan was left with precisely two loyal ships to maintain his blockade of the entire Dutch fleet in the Texel. All the enemy needed was a favourable wind from the east, either to land at Harwich and march straight on London or to invade Ireland. For many weeks the two opposing sides waited for an east wind. It never came. Judicious concessions ended the mutiny, the North Sea Fleet returned to its allegiance, and Frank's *Triton* transported some mutineers to Portsmouth for trial, including two of her own men – a landsman and a cook.

Charles Austen was yet a midshipman and since April had been assigned to the *Endymion* (50 guns), a new-built heavy frigate, just launched on 29 March and still being made ready for sea. Charles and his patron and captain, Sir Thomas Williams, had an opportunity to spend time ashore. Sir Thomas served as one of the jurors at the trial of Richard Parker, the leader of the mutiny at the Nore, while Charles was escorted by his father to London, perhaps to celebrate his eighteenth birthday on 23 June. Eliza de Feuillide took notice of this visit in a letter (*Outlandish Cousin*, pp. 140-43) to Phylly, dated 3 July: 'I had the pleasure of seeing our Uncle Austen some little time since when himself & his youngest Son Charles dined with me.' She added: 'Henry is at Norwich' and later made what was for her a rare comment on contemporary public affairs: 'What do you think in regard to Peace?' and questioned the choice of Lord Malmesbury as the envoy. Britain, shaken by the defeat of Continental allies, by the mutiny in the Fleet and by the tremendous cost of the war, was seeking an honourable peace. On the day that Eliza wrote Lord Malmesbury arrived at Calais, and he settled in Lille where he stayed for two months. He was prepared to be very conciliatory but the French were obdurate and no agreement could be reached.

All that summer the threat of invasion continued. The Dutch ships were crammed with an impatient French army, but still no wind came from the east. Admiral Duncan, fearing for the loyalty of his men, cautiously kept his fleet active at sea, maintaining the Texel blockade. Henry had his hands full with regimental affairs; the men were kept busy escorting enemy prisoners to detention camps. Henry is recorded as suffering some type of accident on 5 August but no details have survived. At the end of August the Dutch transports had to disembark their invasion force, which had consumed all its supplies and could no longer be cooped up on board ship. Nevertheless the Dutch fleet remained as a threat in being.

Eliza had been very concerned about the health of her invalid son Hastings, and sea air had been recommended; in particular her physician had recommended Lowestoft, a seaside town ten miles south of Great Yarmouth, and she arrived there in September for a stay of several weeks. Phylly had playfully suggested that the proximity of Henry was the reason for her choice of place but Eliza tried to refute this in a letter of 22 September (*Outlandish Cousin*, pp. 147-49), pointing out that Norwich was 28 miles away and that 'a Person who cannot absent himself from his Corps for more than a few hours at a time, cannot very conveniently travel 56 Miles to pay a Visit'. However she did reveal that she occasionally drove over to Yarmouth, and this gave the pair an opportunity to meet.

By the end of September the ships of Admiral Duncan's storm-tossed Fleet needed a respite and were ordered to lift their blockade and return to Yarmouth, where they arrived on 2 October, to refit and reprovision. Perversely, almost at once the wind began to blow steadily from the east. The Dutch fleet, impelled by their French allies to make some contribution to the war effort at last, warily put to sea on 7 October. The news reached Yarmouth and Lowestoft on the 9th, and Duncan immediately gathered whatever ships were fit to sail, abandoning stores and men onshore, and set out to find the enemy. On the 11th his fleet of sixteen

battleships found nineteen of the Dutch cruising along their coast at Camperdown and he went in to the attack. The result was a total British victory – no fewer than eleven of the enemy being taken prize. Charles Austen's *Endymion*, finally fit for sea, came on the scene the next day and on the 13th found and engaged the Dutch *Brutus* (74 guns); by superior seamanship *Endymion* inflicted significant damage and casualties on her more powerful foe. Promotions resulted, and Midshipman Charles was commissioned a lieutenant.

The fate of one particular Dutch ship in the battle can be noted. The *Hercules*, Captain Gysbert Jan van Rysoort, caught on fire during the action and had to throw all her gunpowder overboard, and then surrender. Captain Rysoort had been severely wounded in the left arm and body, and was taken into Yarmouth with the other wounded from both sides. The men of the Oxford militia were called on to assist, and the Dutch Admiral Jan de Winter, now captive, praised the humane attention given to his wounded men. Henry, as adjutant, then had a funeral to arrange, for on Saturday 28 October Captain Rysoort died, and two days later was given a military funeral at St Nicholas Church (*Norfolk Chronicle*, 4 November 1797):

On Saturday last died at Yarmouth, Captain Gysbert Jan Van Rysoort, of the Dutch ship the *Hercules*, in consequence of the wounds he received in the engagement between the English and Dutch fleets on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October. – He was interred on Monday with military honours. The Oxfordshire band played sacred music, and, with the party of the regiment who fired three volleys over the grave, preceded the corpse. The pall was supported by four young Dutch Midshipmen who had been in the fleet. The corpse was followed by the Dutch Captains and Officers who are at Yarmouth, and also by the Captains of His Majesty's ships in the roads, and the Officers of the Oxfordshire regiment of militia, who by this voluntary mark of respect paid the most honourable attention to the remains of a brave and fallen enemy.

Eliza returned to London on 20 October, although she may have visited Yarmouth again before she went, for the town was thronged with visitors to share in the excitement and see the captured Dutch ships. Among the visitors was the artist Thomas Rowlandson, whose on-the-spot illustration (Yale Center for British Art) shows the scene on shore, with the victorious British fleet and its battered prizes. Eliza wrote to Phyllis from London on 11 December, with taxes and finance on her mind, and made another topical allusion: 'These new Taxes will drive me out of London, and make me give up my Carriage for I cannot afford an increase in House Rent which my Landlord already talks of, Thirty two pounds a Year in addition to the present expense of a vehicle and four Guineas more on my Man Servants Account' (*Outlandish Cousin*, p. 150). The recent Budget of 24 November had tripled assessed taxes. She also mentioned having received a letter from Jane Austen, visiting Bath, possibly for the first time, and

in the throes of authorship. Her *First Impressions* had been rejected by publisher Cadell in November; but she had then begun work on *Sense and Sensibility*, and must also have been accumulating material for Catherine Morland's visit to Bath in *Northanger Abbey*.

As 1797 came to an end much had happened to the Austens, both in the family and in the public arena. Cassandra lost her fiancé; James found a wife. Frank saw mutiny; Charles action and promotion. Henry was engrossed in the management of his regiment while Eliza agonized over her ailing son, and like everyone else, worried about war and peace, and the taxes to pay for it all.

And, oh yes, on the year's last day Henry and Eliza were married.

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## *Jane Austen and the Knatchbulls*

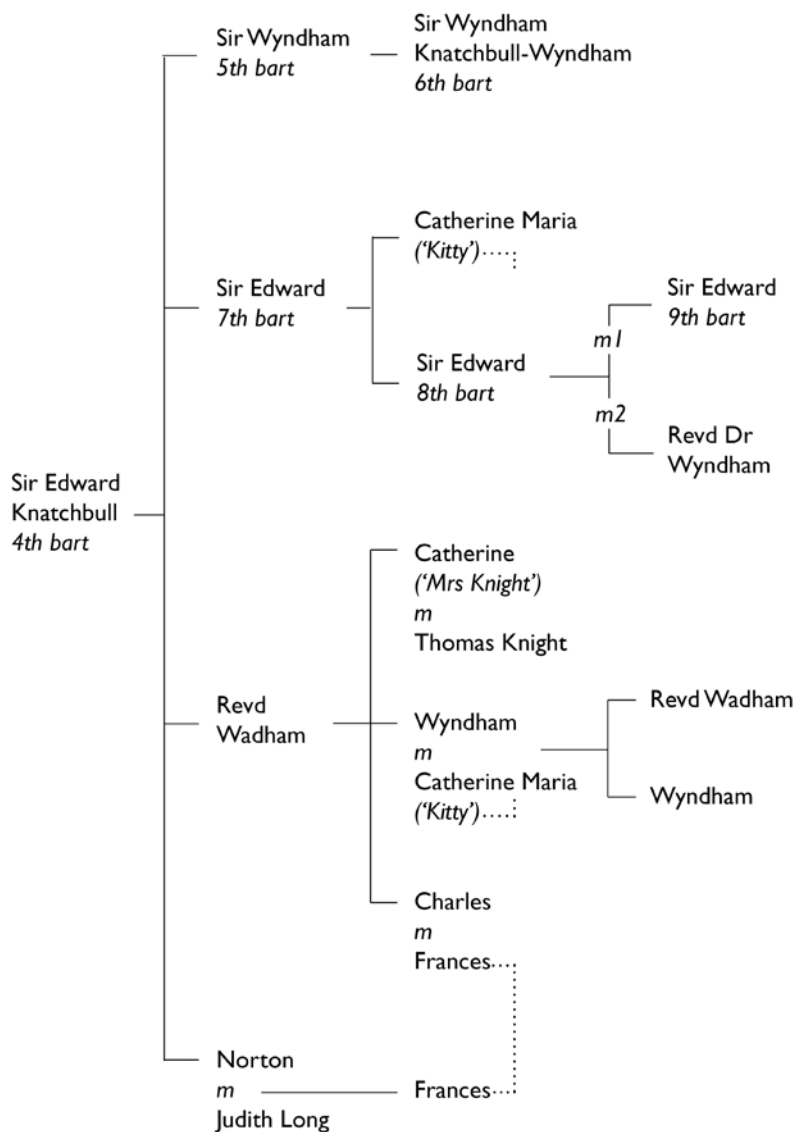
Margaret Wilson

There is a single event in the history of the Austen family which made a very great difference to Jane and her close relations – the adoption of her sixteen year-old brother Edward by a distant relative Thomas Knight, and his wife in 1783. By this act the Kentish families of Austen and Knatchbull were brought together, for Mrs Knight had been born a Knatchbull, whose family seat, Mersham Hatch, was near Ashford. The Knights were childless but wealthy, and were able to introduce their adopted son to a way of life very different from that of his siblings. In due course Edward's generous nature would enable his sisters Jane and Cassandra to share his advantage when he invited them to make lengthy and frequent visits to his grand home at Godmersham Park, near Canterbury. Eventually, he would provide them and their widowed mother with a home of their own in Chawton Cottage. It is recognised that Jane's experience and observation of life on the fringes of her brother's more exalted social circle enriched both her letter writing and her novels.

### **Catherine Knatchbull, Mrs Knight**

Although Jane gives us no details of Edward's benefactor, Thomas Knight, who died in 1794, she does provide some information about his widow Catherine, with whom she kept in contact after the lady retired to Canterbury, thereby vacating

## Simplified Knatchbull Family Tree



Godmersham Park for Edward and his increasingly large family. Through Mrs Knight, Jane also encountered other members of the family who merit examination, for they were varied characters whom Jane with her powers of acute observation found interesting. These included Charles and Wyndham, Catherine's brothers, with whom she and her husband went on an extended French tour soon after their marriage. All three siblings will feature in this article.



*Catherine Knatchbull (Mrs Knight) by George Romney*

We learn something about the relationship between Edward Austen and Mrs Knight from an exchange of letters between them in 1797. Edward referred to Catherine's 'unlimited Bounty and kindness' and his own 'Gratitude and Affection' and tried to persuade her to continue living in Godmersham during her widowhood.<sup>1</sup> In this he failed, for the lady was adamant that she would move out and live in a smaller property in nearby Canterbury. She wrote of having felt 'the tenderness of a Mother' towards her adopted son, adding 'never have you appeared more deserving of affection than at this time'.<sup>2</sup>

Some record of Jane's contact with Mrs Knight is to be found in her letters to Cassandra. In 1796, two years after Thomas Knight died, she was 'remarkably well and in very good spirits'.<sup>3</sup> It was even suggested that 'she will shortly be married again' – certainly a possibility as she was only forty-three and her portrait by George Romney shows her to have been quite a beauty, a fact which Jane herself once commented on. Three years later Jane pointed out to Cassandra that Mrs Knight's bequest to Edward of the Godmersham estate (and Chawton in Hampshire) 'was



no such prodigious act of Generosity after all it seems, for she has reserved herself an income out of it still'. She added, somewhat mischievously, 'this ought to be known, that her conduct may not be over-rated'.<sup>4</sup> Mrs Knight's annuity, according to Dr R. W. Chapman, was a handsome £2,000. She never did remarry but lived in the same house, White Friars, in central Canterbury for eighteen years.

When Cassandra visited Kent in 1807, Jane expected her sister to be spending her time with Mrs Knight 'most pleasantly in quiet and rational conversation' which was the kind of occupation Jane herself preferred.<sup>5</sup> The lady's character suited both the sisters; in 1808 she was, in Jane's words, 'as gentle & kind & friendly as usual' and Jane valued the 'leisure for comfortable Talk' even though it was brief.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, by that year Jane clearly felt that Catherine Knight was a true friend, for she told Cassandra 'I cannot help regretting that now, when I feel enough her equal to relish her society, I see so little of the latter.'<sup>7</sup>

In 1808 Jane was pleased to share with Mrs Knight the subject of Mr John Papillon (rector of Chawton) as an eligible bachelor match for herself – a fanciful notion which was a running joke within the family. Mrs Knight was by now fifty-eight and suffering from insomnia, so Jane suggested that Cassandra should tell her how their cousin Eliza derived benefit in sleeping if she abstained from drinking tea. Other matters were mentioned, like Mrs Knight's interest in her brother James Austen's poems and Jane's first published novel (*Sense and Sensibility*) in which she thought Mrs Knight would 'like my Elinor'.<sup>8</sup> The lady's offer of her spinning wheel to Jane was tactfully and wittily declined. She was always generous, bringing what Jane called 'her usual Fee', half of which Jane intended to keep to help her pay for a Pelisse.<sup>9</sup>

It is not only in Jane's letters that we find a picture of Catherine Knight. A letter from the lady herself to Edward Austen's daughter Fanny and also Fanny's diaries and letters give us more details. Fanny paid a visit to Mrs Knight in March 1809, when she spent a delightful week 'in the comfortable quiet way that I like. We read Miss Burney's charming novel "Cecilia" in the evening'.<sup>10</sup> Fanny's tastes appear to have been similar to those of her aunt Jane. In the following October Mrs Knight wrote to Fanny thanking her for 'just such an account as I like to receive ... your account of the whole family gives me the sincerest Pleasure, and I beg you will assure them all how much I feel interested in their happiness.'<sup>11</sup> She offered to pay for a new watch for the girl when the latter was next in London, choosing one to the value of 20 guineas. When the lady died in 1812, she left Fanny a very generous £2,000 in her will and £1,000 each to Fanny's sisters.<sup>12</sup> From that time Edward's family had to change their name 'in compliance with the will of the late Mrs Knight & we are therefore all Knights instead of dear old Austens. How I hate it !!!!!' wrote Fanny.<sup>13</sup>

### **Norton Knatchbull, Mrs Knight's uncle**

Catherine Knatchbull's father was the Revd Dr Wadham Knatchbull, Prebendary and Chancellor of the Durham diocese and Rector of Chilham, near Godmersham, and his brother was Major Norton Knatchbull. Neither brother was known to

Jane; the latter, however, holds a crucial position in the family framework, for his marriage at the age of forty-seven to a Somerset heiress brought the Knatchbulls to a very different part of England from Kent. Norton was a soldier in the Royal North British Fusiliers, with whom he served in the Battle of Fontenoy (1745), where he was wounded. The portrait of him in military uniform by Gainsborough is an imposing one, so much so that a very young Knatchbull descendant in the 1920s, on seeing it, asked ‘Is that God or wot?’.

Although it has been claimed that Major Norton came to Somerset in order to help suppress a weavers’ riot in Shepton Mallet in 1758, I have not found sources to confirm this.<sup>14</sup> There were certainly weavers’ riots in the town in the 1740s and a letter to the Duke of Newcastle survives in which a serious riot by colliers complaining about high prices in 1753 brought disruption to the town market and requesting troops be sent to restore peace.<sup>15</sup> However, the Major’s regiment (from which he retired in 1757) was not in England from 1751 to 1760, so it is not clear how or why he came to be in the area. Perhaps as a battle-scarred officer nearing retirement he may have been available to lead a local militia. What is without doubt is the fact that in 1758 he became married to a local lady, Miss Judith Long, and moved into her inherited home Babington House, near Radstock.



*Babington, Somerset, the home of a branch of the Knatchbull family from 1758*

Becoming the owner of substantial property himself, the Major had an increased sense of responsibility. In a surviving letter written by him to his nephew Edward, later to become the 8th baronet, he gave the young man advice on his engagement: many young people, he claimed, when making a financially advantageous marriage were tempted into gambling and this vice must be shunned. He makes the delightfully phrased remark ‘£40,000 does not hang upon every Bush’.<sup>16</sup>

### **Charles Knatchbull, Mrs Knight’s brother**

Norton and his wife had only one child, Frances, who in 1785 married her cousin,

Charles, who was Catherine Knight's elder brother. This union ensured that the inheritance of Babington stayed within the Knatchbull clan after Norton's death in 1782. Both Charles and Frances were known to Jane. Charles was born in 1747 and had an active career in the Navy, serving in the War of American Independence. The two ships of which he was Captain were the *Gibraltar* and the *Princessa*; their role in the Battle of Fort Royal in the West Indies and the crucial Battle of the Chesapeake gave Charles first-hand experience of naval warfare.

Charles and Frances had no children, but their consequent freedom to visit other members of the family brought them into Kent, where Charles visited his sister, Catherine, on a number of occasions recorded by Jane. In August 1805 Jane was staying at Goodnestone Farm with Lady Bridges and she refers to Charles and his wife coming to stay at nearby Godmersham, although she did not on that occasion meet them. However, three years later on a June visit to Godmersham Jane was invited by Mrs Knight to spend some time in Canterbury in order to meet Mrs Charles Knatchbull. This may have been the same occasion which Mrs Knight refers to in a letter to Edward Knatchbull, later the 9th Baronet, when he, and his first wife Annabella were also invited to dine with her and 'Charlie and his wife'.<sup>17</sup>

While the Somerset couple were staying in Godmersham, Jane wrote 'Mrs C Knatchbull & I breakfasted tête à tête the next day, for her husband has gone to Mr Toke's' (the Toke family lived at Godinton House, near Ashford). She gives a tantalising reference to Frances, saying that she 'is just what we have always seen her', which unfortunately does not give us much idea of the lady's appearance. Frances was certainly offering the hand of friendship to Jane, who responded in a similar manner, since the possibility of a meeting in Southampton with the three Austen ladies was discussed. Jane remarked to Cassandra 'You & I need not tell each other how glad we shall be to receive attention from or pay it to anyone connected with Mrs Knight'.<sup>18</sup> Jane's further contact with Charles came in 1813, and I shall return to this later.

When Charles took over Babington House, he undertook considerable changes to it. The house had been built in 1705 by Henry Mompesson, and Charles altered and extended it. The two-storey stone house has seven windows on its front and a shell hood to the porch of the central door, with an unusual scalloped lead gutter carried over the shell as a frill. On the North side are three large bow windows bringing more light to the dining and drawing rooms. Outside Charles made improvements to the kitchen garden. The tiny parish church stands very near the house and today you can see stone memorials of the Knatchbolls on the adjacent well-kept lawns. Since he had no children, Charles was succeeded as owner of Babington by his younger brother Wyndham, who survived him by seven years. Babington House is now an exclusive hotel.

### **Wyndham Knatchbull, Mrs Knight's brother**

Wyndham was born in 1750 and led a rather different life from that of his sister and brother for he became a linen-merchant with a business in Gracechurch Street in London. In this respect he was like Jane's character Mr Gardiner, Mrs Bennet's

brother, in *Pride and Prejudice*, whom she described as the kind of man ‘who lived by trade, and within view of his own warehouses’ but was nevertheless ‘well bred and agreeable’.<sup>19</sup>

In 1770 Wyndham decided to ask his cousin Edward (the 8th Baronet) for the hand of his sister Catherine Maria, known as Kitty, in marriage. In his letter he wrote of his ‘most unfeigned Love & Affection’ for her and asked his cousin for his ‘Approbation & good wishes to render it a Match so universally liked by the Relations & Friends as it is desirable to the Parties themselves’. He was honest about his financial situation, making it clear that Kitty did not scorn his career in trade. She was not like Mr Darcy, whose pride meant that although he had perhaps heard of Gracechurch Street, he would need more than ‘a month’s ablution’ to cleanse him from its ‘impurities’ if he went there.<sup>20</sup> ‘Happiness and not Grandeur,’ wrote Wyndham, ‘are my dear Kitty’s Object & in order to make our Income easy she has no Objection to my continuing a Business’. In praise of his future wife he wrote that there was ‘so much Consideration & Generosity in every Sentiment of your Sister that I have every Hour fresh Proof of her Understanding, her Prudence & her Attachment’.<sup>21</sup> Kitty’s own letters to members of the family, sent when a nephew was born and when her brother Edward made a controversial second marriage, suggest that she was a sensitive and warm-hearted person. Indications are that the marriage was a happy one, and the couple had five sons and two daughters.

Jane, however, did not see Kitty in this light, commenting after she died: ‘I had no idea that anybody liked her, & therefore felt nothing for any Survivor, but I am now feeling away on her Husband’s account, and think he had better marry Miss Sharpe’ (the governess to Edward Knight’s children).<sup>22</sup> One result of Kitty’s death was that Jane probably saw a little more of Wyndham over the succeeding years. What is even more interesting is the fact that Jane noted a comment by Wyndham about herself in 1811 when both were in London: Jane wrote ‘I depended upon hearing something of the Eveng from Mr W. K. & am well satisfied with his notice of me. “A pleasing looking young woman”: – that must do; – one cannot pretend to anything better now – thankful to have it continued a few years longer!’<sup>23</sup>

In the year after Catherine Knight’s death Jane saw both Wyndham and Charles during a September visit to Godmersham, where their sister’s memorial was to be placed in the church. She wrote ‘The Mr Ks came a little before dinner on Monday, & Edwd went to the Church with the two Seniors – but there is no inscription yet drawn up’. In her view the brothers ‘are very goodnatured you know & civil & all that – but are not particularly superfine’.<sup>24</sup> A dictionary definition of ‘superfine’ is ‘daintified, over-refined’ and suggests that the sea-captain and linen-merchant did not display ‘airs and graces’ – not surprising considering their professions. It is somewhat ironic that Jane should have written this, as her words would be echoed by her niece Fanny, who in 1869 described Jane herself as ‘not so refined as she ought to have been from her talent’.<sup>25</sup> The brothers dined again with Jane and the Knights at Godmersham a few days later, having stayed at White Friars, their sister’s former home in Canterbury, which Jane wrote ‘is still on their hands’.

In 1826 Charles Knatchbull died and Wyndham inherited Babington, which

he had for seven years before his own death in 1833. His had been a comfortable life-style and his wealth is reflected in his will; his charitable interests are evident in his bequests to several hospitals, the Marine Society, a Refuge for the Destitute and the Philanthropic Society. He was generous to his servants and also to the employees in his business, providing them all with money for mourning clothes and some wages, besides leaving his wardrobe of clothes to his manservant.<sup>26</sup>

### **Wyndham's sons: Wadham and Wyndham**

Two of Wyndham's sons are mentioned by Jane. The eldest one, Wadham, was referred to when he accompanied his father and uncle on a visit to Godmersham in 1811. On that occasion the lad was seventeen and Jane and her niece Fanny had to sort out a domestic incident, involving his clothes. Jane wrote to Cassandra 'I wish you had seen Fanny & me running backwards and forwards with his Breeches from the little chintz to the White room before we went to bed, in the greatest of frights lest he should come upon us before we had done it all. There had been a mistake in the Housemaids Preparations & they were gone to bed. – He seems a very harmless sort of young Man – nothing to like or dislike in him; – goes out shooting or hunting with the two others all the mornng. – & plays at whist & makes queer faces in the eveng'.<sup>27</sup> Wadham grew up to become a clergyman, being a curate in Fritwell, near Banbury, where he continued to enjoy hunting. He married Louisa Wyndham (no relation) in 1825 by whom he had seven children; they lived in Cholderton Lodge, not far from Andover. He rose to become a prebendary of Wells.

Wadham's brother, another Wyndham, had a much shorter life, serving as an Ensign in the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards in the Peninsular War. Mrs Knight had written of him as 'a most indolent young man, & I heartily wish he had gone into a Regiment of the Line'.<sup>28</sup> While fighting in Spain he became ill, was sent home and died at Spithead. Jane mentioned his death when describing a conversation she had in Canterbury with an acquaintance, Miss Milles. 'The death of Wyndham Knatchbull's son will rather supercede the Scudamores [a local clergyman]. I told her [Miss Milles] that he was to be buried at Hatch – She had heard with military Honours at Portsmouth. – we may guess how that point will be discussed, evening after evening'.<sup>29</sup> In fact Miss Milles was correct; he was buried in Portsmouth, where his memorial bears the words 'a sorrowing father caused this tablet to be placed here in sad remembrance of his irreparable loss and in testimony of the mournful regret of the numerous friends and relatives of the deceased'.

### **Sir Edward Knatchbull, 9th Baronet, son of Mrs Knight's first cousin**

Jane Austen encountered two more members of the Knatchbull family: Edward, eldest son of Sir Edward, 8th Baronet, who inherited the title as 9th Baronet in 1819, and his half-brother the Revd Dr Wyndham Knatchbull. As a boy at Winchester he was spirited and sometimes difficult. In August 1798 the Headmaster Dr Goddard wrote to Edward's father about his son's 'Incivility of Manners and Sullenness of Temper' which he said 'is much worse to deal with than any direct and positive

Irregularity'. He feared that Edward could prove to be a bad example; he was looked up to by other boys because he has 'good Understanding' and he could be an 'Influence for much Good or much Harm'. In further letters he hoped that Edward's abilities would justify the expectation that he would be a 'respectable Figure in Life'.<sup>30</sup> After a serious talk with the boy, the Headmaster was confident that Edward would do well, and so it proved, for he went on to Oxford University. This episode is interesting in showing that Edward, despite having some resistance to authority, was already showing qualities of leadership.

Jane Austen mentioned Edward only briefly, in June 1808, when she was staying in Kent. His mother, Mary Hugessen, had been his father's first wife, who died when Edward was three. Through her he inherited the Hugessen property of Provender, near Faversham. When he was twenty-five he married Annabella Honeywood, by whom he had six children before her death in 1814. All that Jane says of him is 'Mr Knatchbull from Provender was at W. Friars when we arrived & staid dinner ... Mr K went away early'.<sup>31</sup> Jane kept an eye open for potential suitors for her niece Fanny Knight but Edward was then a happily married man with two children so not eligible. She could not know that three years after her own death Edward would indeed marry Fanny.

Edward's career as a politician was successful and well recorded; he became an active MP and a Minister, serving as Paymaster General under Sir Robert Peel, as well as a local JP at a time of agrarian unrest in his county.<sup>32</sup>

### **The Revd Dr Wyndham Knatchbull, Sir Edward's half-brother**

Edward's half-brother, Wyndham, was the eldest of the four sons of the 8th Baronet by his second wife, Frances Graham. As Edward's only full brother had died young, it was natural that he should take an interest in his eldest half-brother. Jane met Wyndham in March 1814, when she was staying with her brother Henry in Henrietta Street, London, and the young man, then aged twenty-eight, came to dine. She describes him as 'such a nice, gentlemanlike, unaffected sort of Young Man, that I think he may do for Fanny; – has a sensible, quiet look which one likes'. This suggestion of him as a match for her niece came at a time when Fanny, who was being courted by a different local suitor, John Plumptre, was in need of advice in her love life, guidance which Jane gave her in several often-quoted letters. When Jane met Wyndham she saw a well-mannered, intellectual man who had graduated from Christ Church Oxford at the age of twenty-three and become a Fellow of All Souls, gaining a further degree of Doctor of Divinity. Research into his later life and career show him to have had a more difficult personality than was evident on this slight acquaintance.

While pursuing his academic career, Wyndham had also become ordained and acquired the living of Westbere, near Canterbury. Letters survive between him and Sir Robert Peel, a friend and contemporary at Christ Church; they show Wyndham's desire for the vacant post of Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford and his hope that Peel would use his influence with the Prime Minister to recommend him for this position, but all to no avail.<sup>33</sup> This post again became vacant in 1822 and

despite Peel saying that he ‘left nothing undone’ to promote Dr Knatchbull with the Prime Minister his efforts met with disappointment for a second time. Two developments occurred in the following year. Wyndham was presented to the living of Aldington, Smeeth and Hythe, parishes close to the Knatchbull family seat, and he was unanimously elected to the Oxford Chair not of Hebrew but of Arabic, which had been established by Archbishop Laud in the seventeenth century. So his academic achievement was at last recognised, albeit in a very specialised field.

In 1824 Wyndham was mentioned in the diary of Jane’s niece Fanny, who was now married to Sir Edward.<sup>34</sup> While waiting for his rectory at Smeeth to be made ready, Wyndham stayed in the neighbouring family home at Mersham Hatch while the family were away in London. His Fellowship at All Souls having ended, he was now looking for a wife, and Fanny records in May that his engagement to a ‘Miss Dashwood’ was dissolved. It did not take long for him to find another lady, for in 1826, now settled into his rectory, he married Anna Dawkins, who was in her thirties. In August 1828 she gave birth to what Fanny described as ‘a very little girl not much more than seven months named Augusta’. This precious, premature baby was to be the couple’s only child and fortunately she thrived.

With a wife and child to support, Dr Knatchbull was as keen as ever to improve his position, and earlier in 1828 he persuaded Sir Edward to correspond with the Prime Minister, now the Duke of Wellington, about his desire for a vacant stall at Canterbury; his request was acknowledged but it came to nothing. Later that year the Oxford Chair of Hebrew again became vacant. Undaunted by his previous disappointment Wyndham tried once more to secure the position. Sir Edward mentioned Wyndham’s claim to the Prime Minister, who agreed to put his name forward to the King; Robert Peel also put in a word for his old College friend but warned him that Wellington wanted to leave the decision to ‘the highest authorities in the Church’, with which Peel ‘could only concur’. The eventual outcome was not what the Knatchbolls wanted: the Duke recommended Mr Edward Pusey for the post. Pusey was remarkably young, a mere twenty-eight, and only a deacon, not yet a priest, but he was regarded by many as the best scholar and went on to become an influential figure in the High Church movement. Peel, writing to Sir Edward, said that Pusey was as ‘unknown to me as he was to you’; and the Duke assured Sir Edward that he did ‘everything in my power’ to promote Wyndham, pointing out that the selection process might necessarily hurt the feelings of others who were highly qualified. Wyndham had to be content with that.

Without a very demanding academic post, Wyndham’s energies were now directed towards controversial local matters in his parish. In 1832 Fanny’s diary records that her husband tried to ‘set Dr Knatchbull & his friends to rights about Tythes Rates which ended in a decided quarrel on the Dr’s part & much misconduct’. Without further details it is not clear exactly what was going on but the matter of tithes was very contentious at this time. A recent interpretation of the facts has shown that Kent was the area with the most petitions against tithes in the years 1830 to 1835.<sup>35</sup> Jane Austen, as a clergyman’s daughter, knew all about tithes. Long after her death, her kinsman, the Revd George Moore, was attacked

by farmers in his Wrotham church for his insensitive demands for unreasonable tithes at a time of agricultural problems. Disputes were endless and the agrarian commentator Arthur Young maintained that the clergy were the worse offenders. As a JP, Sir Edward was very much aware of local hardship and was vocal in Parliament in debates before the Commutation of Tithes Act in 1836.

In that same year Sir Edward was so annoyed by Wyndham that he denied him the living of another parish, Bircholt, because, according to Fanny, ‘for months he has not ceased carrying on a vexatious war about tithes’. It was not until twelve years later that the two men came to an understanding, and Dr Knatchbull ‘called to shake hands with Sir Edward by mutual agreement’; with some relief Fanny wrote ‘our intercourse with Smeeth Rectory was in some measure renewed’. Her husband’s death in the following year meant that she now had to face any further problems with her brother-in-law on her own. Nor did Wyndham wait long before raising another issue – the local railway. Fanny wrote ‘A considerable movement got up by Dr Knatchbull for a Station at Smeeth gave me much annoyance. I refused to give up land because Sir Edward had not approved it’. However, a couple of years later she gave in and granted some land. The station proved to be popular with local tradesmen and was much used by Fanny’s son Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen (Lord Brabourne), who became a Director of the South Eastern Railway Company.

In 1854 Wyndham’s daughter, Augusta, married George William Plumptre Carter, whose mother was a distant relative of John Plumptre. George and Augusta went on to have several children. Wyndham’s wife died soon after this marriage and Wyndham himself died in 1868, being the only surviving son of the 8th Baronet’s very large family. These events were recorded by his sister-in-law Fanny, who outlived most of her contemporaries and through her marriage strengthened the links between the Austen, Knight and Knatchbull families.

#### Notes

- 1 Austen Leigh, R. A., ed., *Austen Papers, 1704-1856* (1942), p. 229.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 230.
- 3 Le Faye, Deirdre, ed., *Jane Austen’s Letters* (Oxford University Press, 1995) p. 6.
- 4 *Letters*, p. 34.
- 5 *Letters*, p. 114.
- 6 *Letters*, pp. 129, 134.
- 7 *Letters*, p. 135.
- 8 *Letters*, p. 183.
- 9 *Letters*, p. 129.
- 10 Fanny Knight (later Lady Knatchbull), letter to Miss Chapman, 23 March 1809. Catalogue Mark: U951 C107/3. I am grateful to the Centre for Kentish Studies for allowing me to quote from the Knatchbull family papers.
- 11 Brabourne, Edward, Lord, *Letters of Jane Austen Vol II* (Bentley, 1884), pp. 364-65.
- 12 Le Faye, Deirdre, *A Chronology of Jane Austen and her Family* (Cambridge



University Press, 2006), p. 360.

- 13 Fanny Knight's diary 1812. U951 F24/9.
- 14 Hussey, Christopher, 'Babington, Somerset' *Country Life*, 16 April 1943, pp. 704-7.
- 15 Official correspondence of the Duke of Newcastle, 1753. British Library Add. Mss. 32731 f. 444. I am grateful to Jane de Gruchy of Somerset Archives for help on this point.
- 16 Letter from Norton Knatchbull to his nephew Edward, 11 July 1780. U951 C135/4.
- 17 Brabourne, p. 361.
- 18 *Letters*, p. 135.
- 19 *P&P* (Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 139.
- 20 *P&P*, p. 141.
- 21 Letter from Wyndham Knatchbull to his cousin Edward, 22 December 1781. U951 C135/7.
- 22 *Letters*, p. 120.
- 23 *Letters*, p. 186.
- 24 *Letters*, p. 225.
- 25 *Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. 163 pp. 72-3.
- 26 Public Record Office. PROB 11/1820.
- 27 *Letters*, p. 225.
- 28 Brabourne, p. 361.
- 29 *Letters*, p. 245.
- 30 Letters from Dr Goddard to Sir Edward Knatchbull 8th Bt. August-September 1798. U951 C15/6-8.
- 31 *Letters*, p. 133.
- 32 For Sir Edward's career see *Kentish Family* by Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen (Methuen, 1960) and for his personal life see my book *Almost Another Sister: the Story of Fanny Knight, Jane Austen's Favourite Niece* (Maidstone, 1998).
- 33 Letters from Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington to Sir Edward Knatchbull 9th Bt. and the Revd Dr Wyndham Knatchbull 1814-1828. U951 C14/10-23.
- 34 Fanny Knight's diaries 1824-68. U951 F24/ 21-63.
- 35 Kain, R and Prince, H, *Tithe Surveys for Historians* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

## *‘Mr Griespach a musick master’*

Jane Hurst

When looking through Deirdre Le Faye’s *A Chronology of Jane Austen and her Family*, I came across the entry ‘Mr Griespach a musick master, came to teach the chiln’ for an entry from Fanny Austen/Knight’s diary for 5 May 1813. This was at a time when Jane Austen’s brother Edward and his family were staying at Chawton House for five months and I was curious about such an unusual surname. As the name appeared on another four dates it seemed that ‘Mr Griespach’ must have been fairly local to the village.

Having done some searching, it became clear that the name was actually ‘Griesbach’ and that the ‘musick master’ must have been a member of a large German family who moved to London from Hanover in about 1780 at the request of George III. They played in various court bands and the scientist William Herschel, who was related to the Greisbachs by marriage, wrote in a letter dated 1782: ‘I have had an audience of His Majesty this morning, and met with a very gracious reception. I presented him with the drawing of the solar system, and had the honor of explaining it to him and the queen.... The king ... also gave me leave to come to hear the Griesbachs play at the private concert which he has every evening.’<sup>1</sup>

So far, no local connections, but when I looked for the name in the marriage indexes compiled by the Hampshire Genealogical Society,<sup>2</sup> I came across the wedding of Charles Griesbach of Windsor and Sarah Wigg at Medstead (a parish which adjoins Chawton and Alton) by licence on 15 December 1796. Just under a year later, on 30 October 1797, Charles and Sarah’s son, another Charles, was baptised at Medstead. How did a German court musician meet a Hampshire village girl? That is a question that I have not managed to answer as yet. Sarah seems to have been the daughter of John and Rebekah Wigg, who was baptised in the even smaller settlement of Wield, and her father was probably the ‘John Wigg late of Shalden, now of Medstead, labourer’ who gave information against John Eames Waight of Bishops Sutton for non-payment of wages soon after Sarah was born.<sup>3</sup>

There were five Griesbach brothers, who were the sons of Johann Heinrich and his wife, Sophia Elizabeth Herschel (sister of the astronomer). Charles Friedrich Ludwig Griesbach was the second of the family and baptised in Coppenbrugge in 1760. As well as playing music, he published several works including in 1800 ‘Twelve Military Divertimentos for a Full Band, which occasionally may be played by a small band of two clarinets, two French horns and bassoons. Composed chiefly for the use of their Majesties’ Band, and humbly dedicated (by permission) to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, by His Royal Highness’s most dutiful and devoted servant Charles Griesbach’, and in 1802 ‘Twelve German Quadrilles, Waltzes, and Country Dances Compiled and Arranged for the Piano and Harp’.

Charles and Sarah Griesbach’s movements can be followed by noting where their children were born or baptised. In 1810 and 1811 the family were at Upton Cum Chalvey near Windsor in Buckinghamshire; by 15 August 1813 they were

in the parish of Saint Swithun Over Kingsgate in Winchester as their son Henry Edwin was baptised at that church on that day. Two years later, in June 1815, they went to the same church for the baptism of Edward Paulin but sadly he was buried after only three weeks.

So it seems likely that the ‘Mr Griespach’ who came to Chawton House to teach Edward’s children music on 5 May, 12 May, 16 June, 23 June and 30 June in 1813 was indeed Charles Friedrich Ludwig Griesbach. Was he recommended to Edward or did Edward already know of him before coming to Chawton?

Charles had been the last of the five brothers to come to England from Germany and ‘Charles was the most unsettled in England, and it is said that the Queen twice paid off his debts.’<sup>4</sup> In 1816 Charles was listed in a House of Commons Paper as one of the persons ‘who at the time of His late Majesty’s decease received Saleries, Allowances, or Pensions out of His Privy Purse’ and was said to be a musician aged 60, having given 32 years service and been awarded a pension of £103. 6s. George [Ludolph Jacob] was the oldest brother and was aged 63 with 42 years service and a pension of £185. Charles’s son Charles junior, who had been baptised in Medstead, had followed his father and was part of the Royal Establishment at Windsor with a salary of £60.<sup>5</sup> Charles senior ended up far from Windsor or Hampshire. He retired to Pocklington in Yorkshire, where another of his sons, William Robert, was vicar of Fridaythorpe. Unfortunately both Charles junior and the Revd William had money problems like their father and both were declared insolvent debtors, but Charles senior, dying in 1835, did not live to see either event.

The Griesbach family did have another connection with Jane Austen’s circle. John William, son of Charles Griesbach’s younger brother Justus Heinrich Christian (known as Henry), married as his second wife Jane Baverstock, daughter of James Hinton Baverstock. After the collapse of the Baverstock Brewery in Alton in 1821, James Hinton and his family eventually settled in Windsor, which is how, presumably, Jane and Henry met. The Griesbach-Baverstock marriage took place in 1837 and they lived for a time in St Omer in France before returning to Kentish Town, where Jane died in 1853, aged only 39.

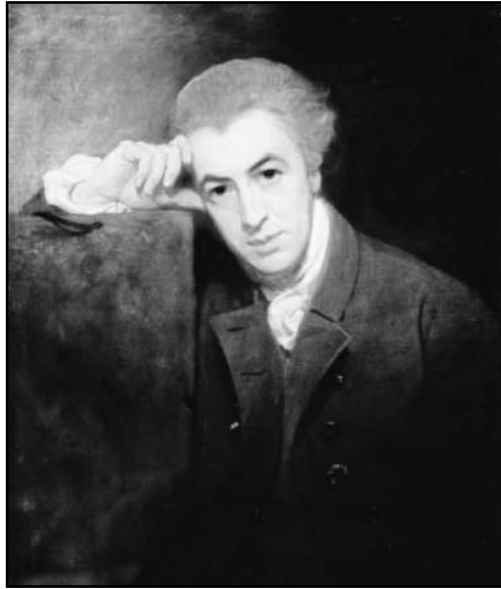
As so often happens when one tries to answer a query such as ‘who was “Mr Griespach”?’ one is left with more questions: how successful were the music lessons? did they carry on for longer than those few short weeks? did Jane Austen hear any of the Griesbach family when she was visiting London? And how did a German court musician meet a Hampshire village girl?

#### Notes

- 1 Edward S Holden, *Sir William Herschel his Life and Works* (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1881), pp. 61-2.
- 2 *Hampshire Marriage Index 1754-1812* CD (Hampshire Genealogical Society, 2008).
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- 4 K G Saur, *Migration and Transfer from Germany to Britain 1660-1914* (Munich, 2007), p. 46.
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*Jane Austen and William Hayley:  
the evidence of fragments*

Diana Barsham



*Sir William Hayley by George Romney*

The success of biographical research often depends on what William Hayley (1745 – 1820), the first biographer of Cowper, called the art of ‘discovering Truth even in Trifles’.<sup>1</sup> The life of Jane Austen, as Claire Harman has recently pointed out, is a particular case in point:

Jane Austen is now considered to be one of the most difficult and challenging of biographical subjects, second only to Shakespeare in terms of how little of the life is knowable and of what interest it is. The complexity of the novels, the originality, intelligence and vitality of the mind behind them makes many of Austen’s admirers long for more evidence of her inner life.<sup>2</sup>

The core narrative of Jane Austen’s life was established by her nephew, James Edward Austen-Leigh, in 1871. His *Memoir* constructed her under the sign of the spinster sister and maiden aunt as a writer who belonged to her family and had little contact with the wider literary world. This representation no longer convinces or appeals to her post-feminist admirers. Kathryn Sutherland has

declared: 'A challenge for the future biographer will be to reveal the potential in Jane Austen's environment as convincingly as the family have persuaded us of its limitations.'<sup>3</sup>

What follows is an attempt to take up this challenge by exploring a little known area of Jane Austen's environment, one which illuminates her inner life and creative processes during those mysterious years for which there is only the most fragmentary evidence. A key figure in this is William Hayley himself, the Chichester poet and biographer who, as the most celebrated writer of her youth, transformed representations of women when he published his best-selling poem *The Triumphs of Temper* in 1781. A staunch champion of women's cultural role, Hayley believed that the correction of female behaviour was best achieved, not by satire such as Pope's in *The Rape of the Lock*, but by providing readers with positive role models. *The Triumphs of Temper* tells the story of Serena, a heroine whose cheerfulness and good humour enable her to triumph over domestic vexations and marry the man of her choice. Phenomenally successful, the poem went through sixteen editions in the next twenty years, receiving endorsements from readers such as Emma Hamilton (who attributed the success of her marriage to it), Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire and the novelist Amelia Opie. Opie was one of many women who recalled how her mother 'judiciously held up its admirable heroine as a model for imitation', making her determined to follow Serena's example.<sup>4</sup> The poem was so widely read that Ozias Humphrey described Hayley as 'the *work-basket* poet of that day – His verses were upon every girl's *Sopha*'.<sup>5</sup>

They were certainly on Jane Austen's. Hayley's *Poems and Plays* was one of the few books in her personal library. Deirdre Le Faye has even suggested that her debut as a writer was made under a *nom de plume*, 'Sophia Sentiment', taken from Hayley's play, *The Mausoleum* (1785). In 1789, her brothers James and Henry published a Letter to the Editor in Issue ix of their Oxford magazine, *The Loiterer*, in which 'Sophia' complains of the magazine's lack of articles appealing to a female readership with a relish for sensational fiction.<sup>6</sup>

*The Triumphs of Temper* teaches its heroine the value of good humour by transporting her in sleep to Pope's 'Cave of Spleen, the doleful realm of all female disorders'. Hayley insists that his Serena is not a paragon of virtue but a character 'so faithfully copied from general nature, that every man, who reads the poem, may be happy enough to know many fair ones, who resemble my heroine'.<sup>7</sup> Hayley was right about that. When Henry Austen published his biographical sketch of Jane Austen in the posthumous edition of *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* (1818), he drew instinctively on Hayley's iconography for his model of female excellence, remembering his sister through her resemblance to Serena. She was, Henry tells us, possessed of 'a truly elastic cheerfulness'; indeed 'cheerfulness, sensibility, and benevolence ... were her real characteristics'. This comes as something of a surprise to readers of her fiction, especially when he continues 'Faultless herself ... she never uttered either a hasty, a silly, or a severe expression'. 'In short,' Henry concludes, 'her temper was as polished as her wit',<sup>8</sup>

a view reiterated by James Edward Austen-Leigh, whose *Memoir* adds ‘Jane had the *happiness* of a temper that never required to be commanded’.<sup>9</sup>

This association with Serena is an important one for Jane Austen, for Serena’s good temper was linked to her passion for novel reading. Hayley was one of the first writers to defend the novel so publicly, insisting that fiction exercised the minds of women while strengthening their moral sympathies. By emphasising Jane Austen’s serenity, both memoirists were determined to present her as an alternative and corrective to more Romantic models of the artistic temperament such as those found in William Godwin’s *Memoir* of Mary Wollstonecraft (1798) or Mrs Gaskell’s *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, where extreme emotion was made the hallmark of literary genius. Not for Jane Austen the Romantic subjectivity displayed by the novelist Charlotte Smith, whose work she devoured with such intense interest that Smith is often considered the most important influence on her own writing. Henry observes suavely:

If there be an opinion current in the world, that perfect placidity of temper is not reconcilable to the most lively imagination, and the keenest relish for wit, such an opinion will be rejected for ever by those who have had the happiness of knowing the authoress of the following works.<sup>10</sup>

Charlotte Smith had dedicated her autobiographical *Elegiac Sonnets* (1789) to William Hayley, acknowledging the help he had given her in getting the poems published and making complimentary references to him as ‘Serena’s poet’ in two of them.<sup>11</sup> Smith, who had known Hayley only by repute, met him in person, Lizzie Bennet style, when she visited his Eartham estate and behaved so conspicuously he invited her into the house. They quickly became friends as well as neighbours and the first part of her best novel, *The Old Manor House*, was written on a visit to Eartham in 1792 when her fellow guests were William Cowper and George Romney. Smith’s shy, ill-treated heroine ‘Monimia’ was later to become the prototype for Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*.

Because of its advocacy of the novel, *The Triumphs of Temper* had an especial appeal for literary women, Anna Seward describing Hayley as the centripetal force in women’s writing: ‘See how we little satellites move around you, our Jupiter.’<sup>12</sup> Serena’s avid bedtime reading draws a scolding from her maiden aunt Penelope, who confiscates the novel in order to read it herself. In early editions of the poem it was Fanny Burney – ‘only the author of Cecilia, Camilla’<sup>13</sup> – whose novels kept Serena awake, but Hayley subsequently updated the passage to include the names of other women writers, among them Amelia Opie, who became another close friend of his. Opie paid a generous personal tribute to Hayley in her own novel *Temper*, published in 1812, where the heroine, Emma, also models herself on Serena, aligning her good temper with religious principle. Opie’s novel also defends Hayley’s poem from the criticism that Serena’s trials had been made ‘too trivial’, insisting that ‘trifles irritate the temper more than things of importance’.<sup>14</sup>



*Serena Reading by George Romney*

Jane Austen herself had explored this issue in *The Watsons*, a fragment dated 1804 or 1805, the year that she spent the autumn in Worthing, just along the coast from Hayley's Turret House in Felpham. We know from Fanny Knight's diary that around the time she was writing *The Watsons* she had Hayley in her mind: in June 1805 the name Serena was used in one of the family plays that she performed with the Godmersham children.<sup>15</sup>

No one would argue that the trials faced by Emma Watson were too trivial. Adopted by a wealthy aunt, then abruptly returned to her family on her aunt's remarriage, she finds herself an unwelcome stranger in an impoverished household where three older sisters compete desperately with each other to find husbands before the death of their invalid father. Hayley's fantasy 'Realm of Spleen', the abode of disease, detraction, disappointment, and discontent, is vividly resituated in a realist register in the Watson household. Where Serena begins her dream voyage in the Boat of Apathy, Emma is conveyed to a ball by a horse so old and habit-bound it requires no driver. Just as Serena is intensely scrutinised by Lord Filigree to see if she attracts enough admiration from others to justify his own interest, so Emma receives the same treatment from Lord Osborne, who subjects her to 'one unceasing stare' as she dances, instructing his friend Tom Musgrave to 'bring me word how she looks by daylight'.<sup>16</sup> Like Serena, Emma will eventually

reject this lord in favour of a more intellectual lover, Serena's poet becoming Emma's clergyman, Mr Howard. *The Watsons* ends with Emma sitting alone like Serena with her gout-ridden father, finding consolation in a book:

Emma was at peace from the dreadful mortifications of unequal Society, & family Discord ... She was at leisure, she could read & think ... The Evils arising ... were neither trifling, nor likely to lessen; & ... the dissipation of unpleasant ideas which only reading could produce, made her thankfully turn to a book.<sup>17</sup>

The fragment concludes: 'It was well for her that she was naturally Cheerful; – for the Change had been such as might have plunged weak spirits in Despondence.'

*Mansfield Park* (1814) continues to expound the importance of good temper. Henry Crawford falls in love with Fanny Price, recognising the trials she has endured: 'Her temper he had good reason to depend on and to praise. He had often seen it tried.'<sup>18</sup> In significant contrast to Hayley's Serena, the meek Fanny Price feels anger at Crawford's persistence, her anger a sign both of right judgment and her slowly emerging sense of selfhood. In this novel, trials of temper are not restricted to the heroine: Dr Grant loses his over a green goose, while Mrs Norris and Maria eventually form a separate household in which 'their tempers became their mutual punishment'; while Sir Thomas learns the value of Fanny's good temper, that of Aunt Norris is 'in a state of such irritation, as to make her everywhere tormenting'.<sup>19</sup>

*The Watsons* occupies a pivotal position in Jane Austen's writing. The only text to bridge the years between her early writing including the first drafts of *Elinor and Marianne*, *First Impressions* and *Susan* and the three novels of her maturity, it is also the best guide to those mysterious years 1800 – 1805, for which few letters exist. As a rule, she is not known as an autobiographical writer, but *The Watsons* is considered by many to be an exception to this: the deaths, first of her friend Madam Lefroy in December 1804 and then of her father in January 1805, made her plight something like that of her heroine. Claire Tomalin writes:

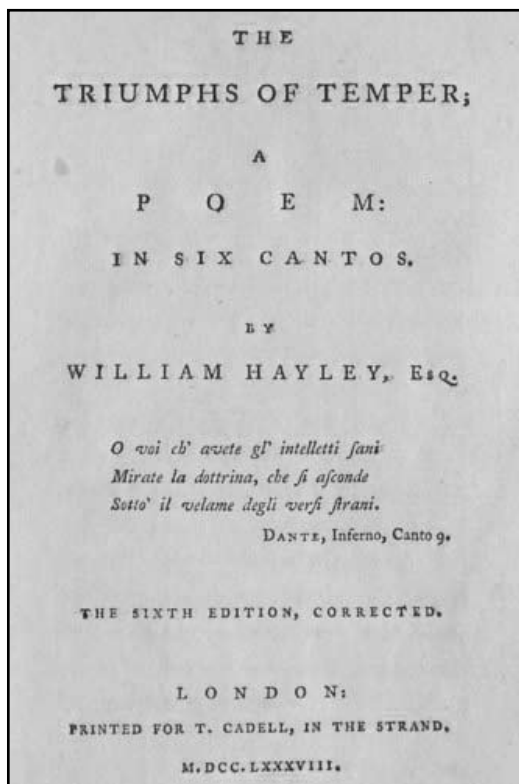
For someone who took care not to write autobiographically, this degree of parallel between her fiction and her own life may have become impossibly tricky to handle.<sup>20</sup>

John Halperin considers *The Watsons* as evidence of her unhappiness in these years. After her evanescent seaside romance, her dramatic refusal of Harris Bigg Wither's proposal in 1802, and the dull evening parties of Bath, she vented her feelings, he suggests, in writing. *The Watsons* is 'the product *par excellence* – and the only literary product – of Jane Austen's disappointed, frustrated, uncomfortable middle years'. Halperin considers her disappointment in marriage as the key to her character; after 1805 she 'reverted to being only another impoverished spinster' leading an uneventful life.<sup>21</sup>



This is to overlook an important fact. Jane Austen had learnt in 1802 that it was not the marriage proposal but the power of refusal that stimulated her creativity. She used this power to great effect in the manuscript that became *Pride and Prejudice*, where it is Elizabeth Bennet's rejection of Darcy's first proposal which transforms the novel. According to Cassandra, the same power of refusal was to be exercised by the penniless Emma Watson when she turns down Lord Osborne. As Fanny Price demonstrates in her refusal of Henry Crawford, rejection contained a power that was little short of revolutionary; it was a power of considerable significance in the alchemy of Jane Austen's creative development. Unfinished though it is, *The Watsons* takes us close to the hidden secrets of her writing.

Once again, the work of William Hayley is relevant to her development. It is also worth remembering that during her time in Bath, Hayley had many regular correspondents in the city: one was Lady Hesketh who supplied him with material for his *Life of Cowper*; another was Lady Bolingbroke, who, as Charlotte Collins, had been the friend and companion of Charlotte Smith when she invaded Hayley's grounds to secure an introduction. Charlotte Collins, whose name was yet to become famous through *Pride and Prejudice*, regularly supplied Hayley with gossip about young female visitors to the city, especially any with a claim on his benevolence. Hayley had a particular talent for comforting bereaved women.



He had followed up the success of *The Triumphs of Temper* with another, more serious, work also aimed at a female readership. Three volumes long, *A Philosophical, Historical and Moral Essay on Old Maids by a Friend to the Sisterhood* (1785) was one of the first major modern studies of the spinster or single woman; initially dedicated to Elizabeth Carter, the Queen of the Blue Stockings, who did not like it, the work was later translated into German, gaining recognition for its originality and scholarship. Despite an occasional facetiousness of tone, the *Essay* offers a remarkable reappraisal of the single life for women, presenting the state not as a misfortune but as a rational choice. His discussion ranging from the Christian saints to the modern blue stockings, he aimed to counteract the negative stereotyping of old maids, especially the tendency to regard them as 'particularly infected with envy and ill-nature'.<sup>22</sup> After his own satirical representation of Serena's 'Aunt Penelope', Hayley moves to a discussion of character-types now familiar to us from Jane Austen's writing: those like Eliza Watson, who feels she 'could do very well single for my own part – A little Company, & a pleasant Ball now and then, would be enough for me',<sup>23</sup> or Emma Woodhouse, happy to be 'the delight and support of an indulgent, but very whimsical old father',<sup>24</sup> or Miss Bates, whose 'cheerfulness and good-nature atone for all her deficiencies'.<sup>25</sup> Old Maids, Hayley argues, are an injured body, maligned to divert attention from what is actually enviable in their condition. Of particular importance are those single women who sublimate their passions either through charitable works or artistic creativity; he formally dedicates his pen to this 'numerous, intelligent, and powerful sisterhood' with their 'passport to Providence', and dreams of becoming their high priest.<sup>26</sup>

Hayley's championship of single women, his wish to defend 'that injured and amiable community',<sup>27</sup> certainly affected Jane Austen's viewpoint in the years between 1800 and 1809, when she rethought both her personal and her writing identity. She had glanced several times at Hayley's *Essay* in the final version of *Sense & Sensibility*, first in Lady Middleton's abandonment of music after her marriage, a practice Hayley particularly condemns,<sup>28</sup> and again when Miss Steele, the novel's old maid, ignores Hayley's advice to avoid pink ribbons: 'There now, you are going to laugh at me too. But why should not I wear pink ribbons? I do not care if it is the Doctor's favourite colour.'<sup>29</sup> Hayley's *Essay* strengthened her own position and gave her confidence to direct her own maternal feelings into literary production, expressing only condescending pity for married women, 'poor animals, worn out with childrearing before their 30th birthday'; the death of her sister-in-law Elizabeth Knight in 1809 served as a forceful confirmation of this.<sup>30</sup>

*The Watsons* is the best aid we have for understanding Jane Austen's inner life and the tensions that fostered her creativity. It is an autobiographical text not just because the heroine's situation resembles her own but, more importantly, because it reveals the developing dialectic between Jane Austen the private woman and Jane Austen the aspiring writer. This is the issue she begins to confront through the immanent conflict between Emma Watson, a picture of female perfection,

and her troublesome double, the active, unscrupulous, self-authoring Penelope, or 'Pen', as she is significantly called. Pen, who remains a spectral presence in the fragment, is described as having a love of ridicule, sharp wits, great spirits and little care for what she says; Emma declares herself afraid of this unseen sister, whose proclivities define her as possessing 'too masculine & bold a temper'.<sup>31</sup> Where Emma is a passive victim trapped in a family she despises, Pen has developed an agency of her own in the outer world.

In a story themed on cross-generational relationships, the high-spirited, satirical Penelope has gone to Chichester in pursuit of a much older man. Pen's power to unsettle her family by her bold strategies for survival perhaps indicates the real reason why Jane Austen discontinued her story; for the unpublished writer, Pen is still too difficult and dangerous to bring into focus. She possesses secrets and qualities not just antithetical to those of the conventional heroine but also too revealing of Jane Austen's inner life. Emma's fear of her sister Pen may also indicate a nervousness on Jane Austen's about her own, often anarchic creative powers, especially when taken beyond the privacies of domestic life. It was a fear she was eventually to dramatize through the experiences and emergent selfhood of Fanny Price; the uncanny doubling between Emma and Pen will be reformulated in the strange intimacy between Fanny Price and Mary Crawford, who inherits Pen's careless extroversion. The mirror relationship between these two bonded but rival heroines holds an image of Jane Austen's own self-division, producing a tension between writer, text and reader which threatens to destabilise the novel.

Where *The Watsons* is a text everywhere concerned with uncanny returns, *Mansfield Park* acquires its depth and definition from its powers of repressions. In a novel so concerned with remembering and forgetting, Fanny's disquisition on memory draws attention to this feature of both house and novel: 'the powers, the failures, the inequalities of memory ... sometimes so retentive, so serviceable, so obedient – at others, so bewildered and so weak – and at others again, so tyrannic, so beyond control! – We are to be sure a miracle every way – but our powers of recollecting and of forgetting, do seem particularly past finding out.'<sup>32</sup> One of the texts *forgotten* in *Mansfield Park* is of course *The Watsons*, as Emma's experience of returning to her family is recycled in Fanny's return to her overcrowded Portsmouth home. Pen's adventures in Chichester seem to undergo a similar repression, for William Hayley remains the ghost in Fanny's attic, the angel in the house of this complex novel. Essential to the heroine's inner strength are the books she cherishes in her white-washed room. William Cowper, Jane Austen's favourite poet, is precious to Fanny too; her first attempt at a public 'voice' comes to us, before the visit to Sotherton, mediated by her quotation of Cowper's lament for the 'fallen avenues' in *The Task*.<sup>33</sup>

Cowper is the link that most overtly connects Jane Austen to Hayley in a novel which otherwise tries to forget him. His biography, in which Cowper's letters and late poems were published for the first time, presented its subject as a morally perfect man, pre-eminently the 'Poet of Christianity'.<sup>34</sup> Jane Austen's

familiarity with this work is encoded in the climactic scene of *Mansfield Park* when Fanny, before her coming-out ball, returns to her attic room to find her cousin Edmund writing at the table. His fragmentary letter breaks off into a kind of proposal: 'My very dear Fanny you must do me the honour to accept ...', as he offers her a gold chain to wear with her brother's gift of a topaz cross. As she opens the jeweller's envelope 'almost unconsciously', her mind at this point, like Jane Austen's writing, is lifted on 'a heavenly flight'. Trying to subdue her joy, Fanny looks again at the fragment of his handwriting, overwhelmed by a distinctly literary kind of love:

Two lines more prized had never fallen from the pen of the most distinguished author – never more completely blessed the researches of the fondest biographer. The enthusiasm of a woman's love is even beyond a biographer's. To her, the handwriting itself, independent of anything it may convey, is a blessedness.<sup>35</sup>

In a Freudian slip, 'the fondest biographer' referred to here is of course Hayley himself, who had emphasised in his introduction the overwhelming emotion he felt at the sight of Cowper's handwriting:

In receiving a collection of many private Letters ... in the well-known characters of that beloved Correspondent, at the sight of whose hand I have often exulted, I felt the blended emotions of melancholy regret, and of awful pleasure.<sup>36</sup>

As fiction and real life, hero and heroine, novelist and biographer meet in this rhapsodic scene of Christian unity, there is more than one creative miracle at work. Behind *Mansfield Park* stands another forgotten text, Hayley's only novel, *The Young Widow* (1789), a work whose genesis was in Hayley's friendship with Charlotte Smith. Structured like *Mansfield Park* on the opposition and attraction between erotic desire and Christian principle, Hayley had wanted 'to shew ... that the most dazzling and attractive qualities produce only misery to their possessor' if they are not informed by a proper sense of religion.<sup>37</sup> He also had the following proposal to make:

As there is, perhaps, no species of composition so universally read as a novel ... it is surely to be wished, that a vehicle so alluring might be effectively employed in the service of religion ... Indeed, this province of literature would be happily ennobled, if those who possess the talents to excel in it would more frequently render so favourite an amusement a lesson of Christianity.<sup>38</sup>

*Mansfield Park* is Jane Austen's answer to this proposal, one that transforms its sources in the process. Hayley's novel foregrounds an anti-hero, Henry, a

charming unbeliever who falls victim to an adulterous relationship when his offer of marriage to the pious heroine is rejected. Too late to redeem himself, Henry begs his friend Edmund to instruct his young ward Fanny in a proper sense of religious principle, and dies offering his own story as a moral lesson to the next generation. Before his death he sends his gift of a jewelled cross to reunite two cousinly lovers.<sup>39</sup>

In the *Essay on Old Maids*, Hayley described this unmarried sisterhood as likely to become 'the most learned body in this enlightened kingdom'.<sup>40</sup> Invited to meet James Stanier Clarke at Carlton House in 1815, the now successful Jane Austen had quickly disclaimed any such identification for herself: 'I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible Vanity, the most unlearned & uninformed Female who ever dared to be an Authoress.'<sup>41</sup> Though Stanier Clarke (1765-1834) has been the butt of considerable ridicule from Jane Austen's biographers, seen as a nincompoop who patronised a woman of genius, he was in fact no parvenu literary man, and Jane herself had known of him for years.<sup>42</sup> Clarke had served a long apprenticeship to literature in one of the best gentleman's libraries in the country, living with, and working as, Hayley's secretary and assistant on the *Life of John Milton* (1794). It was Hayley who encouraged Clarke in his literary ambitions and who recommended him to Lord Egremont at Petworth, where he became librarian before moving on to Carlton House. Lifelong friends, Clarke wrote to Hayley from his sick bed in 1818 to say he was reading 'the Posthumous Novel of a Young Lady I was much struck with ... – Miss Austen. The novel is called 'Northanger Abbey'. In my humble opinion it is like all she ever wrote – Full of Genius & Originality.'<sup>43</sup> William Hayley, one of the earliest readers of *Pride and Prejudice*, knew that already.

## Notes

- 1 William Hayley, unpublished letter to Lady Hesketh, (1801), Hayley archive, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
- 2 Claire Harman, *Jane's Fame: How Jane Austen Conquered the World*, Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2009, p. 37.
- 3 Kathryn Sutherland, 'Jane Austen's Life and Letters' in *A Companion to Jane Austen*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, p. 29.
- 4 See Morchard Bishop, *Blake's Hayley: The Life, Works, and Friendships of William Hayley*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1951, p. 129.
- 5 See Joseph Farington, *The Farington Diary*, London: Hutchinson & Co, 1923, p. 99.
- 6 Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen, A Family Record*, Cambridge, 1989, p. 58.
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- 11 Charlotte Smith, *Elegiac Sonnets* (1789), Otley & Washington DC: Woodstock Books, 2001, Sonnets xix and xxx, p. 19.
- 12 Morchard Bishop, *Blake's Hayley*, p. 112.
- 13 *NA*, p. 38.
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- 15 Deirdre Le Faye, *Fam. Rec.*, p. 149-50.
- 16 *The Watsons* p. 335.
- 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 361-62.
- 18 *MP*, London: Penguin Classics, p. 271.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 432.
- 20 Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen, A Life*, London: Penguin Books, 1998, pp. 186-87.
- 21 John Halperin, *The Life of Jane Austen*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, pp. 133-37.
- 22 William Hayley, *A Philosophical, Historical, and Moral Essay on Old Maids*, London: Cadell, 1786, Vol 1, p. 84.
- 23 *The Watsons*, p. 317.
- 24 William Hayley, *Essay*, Vol 1, p. 152.
- 25 *Ibid.*, Vol 1, p. 223
- 26 *Ibid.*, Vol 3, p. 230 and p. 251.
- 27 *Ibid.*, Vol 1, p. 230.
- 28 See *Ibid*, Vol1, p. 131.
- 29 *S&S*, London: Penguin, p. 255.
- 30 See Halperin, *Jane Austen*, p. 164.
- 31 *The Watsons*, p. 318.
- 32 *MP*, p. 193.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 53 and n. p. 487.
- 34 William Hayley, *The Life of William Cowper with Remarks on Epistolary Writers*, Chichester: J. Johnson, 1809, Vol 4, p. 219.
- 35 *MP*, pp. 242-45.
- 36 William Hayley, Introductory Letter to the Right Honorable Earl Cowper, *The Life of William Cowper*, Vol 1, p. vii.
- 37 William Hayley, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of William Hayley, Esq.*, London: Henry Colburn, 1823, Vol I, Bk 7, Ch 5, pp. 375-76.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 William Hayley, *The Young Widow*, Vol 4, pp. 351-65.
- 40 William Hayley, *Essay*, Vol 3, p. 251.
- 41 Deirdre Le Faye (ed), *Jane Austen's Letters*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, No. 132D, p. 306.
- 42 See *Letters*, p. 22.
- 43 James Stanier Clarke, unpublished letter to William Hayley, 1818, Hayley archive, Fitzwilliam Museum.

## *Adlestrop and the Austen connection: the Leigh family*

Victoria Huxley

The Leigh Family: ‘...descended from a long race of plain independent Country Gentlemen’ Mary Leigh, *History of the Leigh Family, Adlestrop*<sup>1</sup>

Young and impressionable, Jane Austen first came to Adlestrop in 1794 when she was just nineteen, exchanging one vicarage in Hampshire to stay in another in this pretty corner of the Cotswolds. Why did she come to Adlestrop — a small and insignificant village in north Gloucestershire — and what were her family connections to this part of the world? The reasons are straightforward. Jane Austen’s maternal grandfather, Thomas Leigh, was born there in 1696 and her mother was naturally keen to revisit her cousins and the happy memories of her childhood and for her own children to build bridges with the Leighs. Richer and grander by far was the noble branch of the family led by Lord Leigh not far away at Stoneleigh Abbey in Warwickshire, which Jane would see on her final trip to the Midlands in 1806.

Jane travelled together with her mother and sister Cassandra, and perhaps with one or more of her brothers. There is also evidence in Jane’s letters that Cassandra made further visits in 1813 and 1814.<sup>2</sup> Jane was to become very well-acquainted with Adlestrop and her cousins since she returned in 1799 and 1806 and, throughout her life, kept in constant touch with events there by letter. As the wise Lady Russell declares in *Persuasion*, ‘Family connections were always worth preserving’. The Adlestrop Leighs were the senior (though poorer) branch of the Leigh family and at Adlestrop they ruled the roost; one cousin was the rector, the other the owner of the mansion at Adlestrop Park and squire of the village and its environs. I believe that Jane’s visits to Adlestrop and Stoneleigh Abbey fired her imagination, and that these places, her cousins and the history of the Leigh family became a rich source of material which she drew upon in some of her novels.

Adlestrop is the quintessential English village with its attractive country setting at the foot of a wooded hillside, the old houses fashioned in golden Cotswold stone, untroubled by modern traffic and looking as if nothing has changed for hundreds of years. The Leigh influence still holds in the twenty-first century: the current Lord Leigh lives in a nearby farm on the hill above the village and, through a trust, effectively still owns the freeholds of many of its houses plus substantial agricultural land holdings. The village is a symbol of the stability of English society and rural patterns, and it has been suggested that the improvements carried out by Humphry Repton to the lay-out of the village, the landscaping of Adlestrop Park and the Old Parsonage directly informed one of the themes of *Mansfield Park*.

Mrs Austen relished the splendour of her Leigh heritage, and the family were very conscious of their mother’s ancestry. One of Jane’s cousins, Mary Leigh, wrote a history of the Leighs in 1788 just before Jane’s first recorded visit to

Adlestrop, and it is thanks to this rich source that many of the old stories about the family, their household and the villagers have survived. She dedicated the volume to the then head of the family, the young James Henry Leigh, stating:

You wish me to collect all the anecdotes I can recollect and gather, of our Family ... prepare yrself for much oral tradition; for old Womens legends, – for Ghosts & Goblins & for being extremely tired of [my] prolixity.<sup>3</sup>

A small flavour of her storytelling gifts can be seen from this introduction. The history is written in a large volume bound in cream and gold with decorated endpapers that show a vignette of Adlestrop Park. Mary, then aged fifty-seven, wrote her narrative clearly and legibly on the left-hand side of each double page spread, leaving the facing page for notes or for addenda often inserted by her husband or other members of the family. The volume found its way to Stoneleigh Abbey, where it was used by her descendants right up to the 20th century as a scrapbook in which to paste letters, notes of family events and other memorabilia.

Who were the actual Leighs whom Jane Austen met and was familiar with? Jane was directly affected by their sagas of dynastic marriages, untimely deaths and mental instability, their quest for fashionable improvements, their money struggles and their quarrels over inheritance. While staying there she would have observed her cousins enjoying total sway in the great house as well as in the pulpit, all bolstered by the financial benefits of their landownership. The rectory, inhabited by her childless uncle and his wife and sister, must have seemed quiet and a little dull after her own home crowded with her brothers and her father's pupils, but Adlestrop had the advantage of a wonderful setting and accessible walks and rambles.

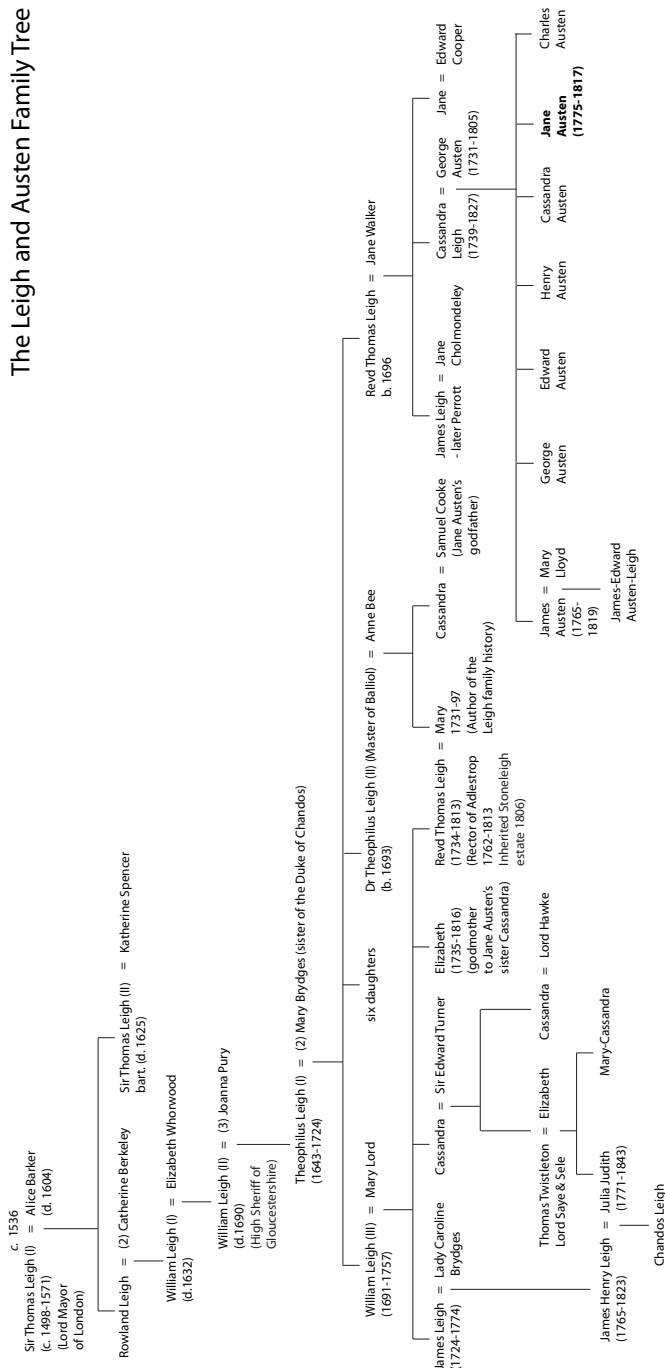
### **The Revd Thomas Leigh (1734-1813)**

Of Thomas the 3<sup>rd</sup> son of William Leigh, it becomes this flippant and well inked pen to be laconic – for of all men living he most dislikes praise ... after Evesham School to Balliol and from thence to Magdalen College (where he resided with fair fame) till the year 62. He then became Parson of Adlestrop.<sup>4</sup>

Thomas Leigh was the youngest son of William Leigh (1691-1757), a nephew of Jane's grandfather (also Thomas Leigh) and was deeply attached to Adlestrop. He lived at the parsonage, where he held the family living for an amazing fifty-one years, residing with his wife, Mary, and later with his unmarried younger sister, Elizabeth. Close and continual links with the Austens and their children were maintained between the two families. The Revd Thomas was godfather to Jane's favourite elder brother Henry, and Elizabeth was godmother to Cassandra. Jane characterised the Revd Thomas as 'worthy, clever, and agreeable' and had known him since she was a small child as he had often stayed at Steventon as a young man and was much liked for giving the boys little presents of money. Another



# The Leigh and Austen Family Tree



glimpse of his involvement with Jane was his visit to her and Cassandra during their schooldays at the Abbey School in Reading, when he presented them with half a guinea each.

Thomas took on the role of guardian to his nephew, the young James Henry Leigh, who was left without his father at the age of nine. The other guardian was the third duke of Chandos, James Henry's maternal uncle. After his father's death James Henry and his mother, Lady Caroline Brydges, lived largely with her grand relations, and Adlestrop Park was let, which meant that Thomas had to take responsibility for all the Leigh affairs during this period. It was he who led the way in the changes and improvements to the grounds of his rectory, helped his brother, James, to do the same and later encouraged his nephew to undertake further upheavals when they employed the leading garden designer of the day, Humphrey Repton, to reshape and landscape Adlestrop Park. Even more interesting are the changes to Adlestrop rectory and its grounds, which mirror Henry Crawford's suggestions for improvements to the parsonage of Thornton Lacey in *Mansfield Park*. Crawford specifically mentions turning its entrance round, clearing away obstructive outbuildings and making a new garden as essential work; Mary Leigh's history records similar improvements to the house and its gardens from 1763 onwards:

Dr Leigh resigned the Adlestrop Living and yr father James Leigh presenting it to his brother, Thomas Leigh, he immediately began a thorough repair of the Parsonage House, turning the entrance and main front westward, making there a new creation of a Pleasure Ground, by destroying a dirty farmyard & house which came within a few yards of the Windows.

Like Edmund Bertram, here was the younger son of an eminent family becoming a clergyman with the gift of a family living who was rich enough to embellish his surroundings in the spirit of an 'improver'. I imagine Thomas as a man of great energy, perhaps impatient at being confined to a small parish, a scholar yet one also concerned with practicalities. In his seventies, when he might have enjoyed a peaceful retirement, he had to wrestle with the vexed issue of the Stoneleigh inheritance. When he died in 1813 Jane wrote about him with great affection in a letter to her brother Frank:

...the respectable, worthy, clever, agreeable Mr Tho. Leigh who has just closed a good life at the age of 79 & must have died the possessor of one of the finest Estates in England & of more worthless Nephews and Neices than any other private man in the united Kingdoms.<sup>5</sup>

There is a memorial tablet to him in Adlestrop church honouring his long contribution as rector and he is buried together with his wife, Mary Leigh:

Reverend Thomas Leigh, formerly of Magdalen College, Oxford and 51

years rector of this parish. B. July 1 1734 d. June 26 1813. Also in same vault, Mary Leigh daughter of Rev Dr Leigh, master of Baliol College and the Affectionate wife of said Rev. Thomas Leigh, youngest son of William Leigh Esquire b. 20 July 1731 d. 9 February 1797 and in family vault adjoining Elizabeth Leigh d. of William Leigh b. November 17 1735 d. 18 April 1816



*The memorial in Adlestrop church to Jane's Austen's cousins:  
Thomas, Mary and Elizabeth Leigh*

### **Mary Leigh (1731-97)**

‘She wrote some novels highly moral & entertaining.’<sup>6</sup>

Jane's first hostess at Adlestrop Rectory was Mary Leigh, a first cousin and old friend of her mother's. It was not until she was in her early thirties that Mary, the daughter of the colourful Master of Balliol, Theophilus Leigh, was to marry her cousin, Thomas, who was three years her senior. We do not know if it was a love match or simply a convenient one for both sides of the family but judging from her husband's comments after her death (see below) it seems to have been a happy one. They had no children and because of this took a very close interest in all their other relatives – especially the young heir to Adlestrop Park, James Henry Leigh. On their marriage her father gave up the Adlestrop living, which James Leigh then passed to his brother, and the newly-weds moved into the parsonage.



*The church living of St Mary Magdalene, Adlestrop belonged to the Leigh family*

Mary's family history is a detailed compilation of the extended Leigh family tree that must have taken her several years to research and complete. It demonstrates her clear and intelligent mind, as well as a garrulous propensity for amusing old stories through which shines her love of Adlestrop and the Leigh family; and of course it includes a description of Jane's own family:

Cassandra (the second daughter of Thomas Leigh & Wife of the truly respectable Mr Austen) has eight children: James, George, Edward, Henry, Francis, Charles, Cassandra & Jane. With his sons (promising to make figures in life) Mr Austen educates a few youths of chosen friends and acquaintances. When amongst this liberal society, the simplicity of hospitality & taste which commonly prevailed in affluent families among the delightful valleys of Switzerland, even recur to my memory.<sup>7</sup>

This looks as if Mary had visited the household at Steventon and formed a firm opinion of the Austen family. Why does she compare them to families in Switzerland? Did Mary travel there in her youth and experience a more open way of living – a more liberal society – than was customary in England? As the daughter of the Master of Balliol, brought up in the hot house environment of Oxford, Mary had an unusual upbringing and the opportunity to meet many university wits and thinkers and perhaps possessed a more open mind than some

of her contemporaries. In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, written a generation later in 1818, the heroine Elizabeth writes warmly of Swiss society and its egalitarian nature:



*The west frontage of Adlestrop's rectory where Jane Austen stayed in 1794, 1799 and 1806, possibly the inspiration for the parsonage at Thornton Lacey*

The republican institutions of our country have produced simpler and happier manners than those which prevail in the great monarchies that surround it. Hence there is less distinction between the several classes of its inhabitants ...<sup>8</sup>

Mary Leigh's observations on the family are intriguing and chime, in some respects, with the mean-spirited remarks made in 1869 by Jane's niece Fanny Knatchbull:

The [Austens] were not rich & the people around with whom they chiefly mixed, were not all high-bred, or in short anything more than *mediocre* & they of course tho' superior in *mental powers* & *cultivation* were on the same level as far as *refinement* goes ... both the Aunts were brought up in the most complete ignorance of the World and its ways (I mean as to fashion &c) & if it had not been for Papa's marriage which brought them into Kent ... they would have been ... very much below par as to good Society & its ways.<sup>9</sup>

Mary Leigh was more generous in her appraisal of the Austen family, seeing their lack of 'refinement' as a positive quality – 'simplicity of hospitality and taste'. Claire Tomalin, a perceptive biographer of Jane Austen, comments on Fanny's put-down, looking at Jane's experiences at Godmersham:

For an author who took social discomfort as one of her main themes, it meant that Godmersham was precious as a place in which to observe and record ... No one observes the manners of a higher social class with more fascination than the person who feels they do not quite belong within the magic circle.<sup>10</sup>

Only at the end of Mary's history do we find information on the author herself as she was too modest to provide any. It was added by her husband, presumably after her death:

But of herself some just account shd be added by her surviving husband ... She wrote some novels highly moral & entertaining. But her favourite amusement was drawing and painting in miniature ... the withdrawing room at the Parsonage was hung with her paintings, as was likewise her dressing room with a paper of Chinese landscape all of her composition and painting ... one of the most affectionate of wives & most agreeable cheerful and entertaining of companions.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps these 'moral and entertaining novels' were circulated among the family as was common – it was certainly a habit in the Austen household, as we know from Jane's letters. Her own novels were read aloud before they were published, and later her niece Anna would send her own work to Chawton for the family to read and discuss. After reading the family history I cannot imagine that Mary's novels were not entertaining, and it is a pity that nothing of them survives.

### **Elizabeth Leigh (1735-1816)**

Elizabeth became a permanent companion to her elder brother after his wife died in 1797 and would have welcomed the Austens in their two later visits to the rectory. Her name rarely appears in family trees or is noticed by the biographers of Jane Austen, but from Jane's letters it can be seen that Elizabeth was in frequent touch with the Austens and she was important in the chain of communication between the Austen/Leigh network of cousins. The Austens' letters are always directed to the inhabitants of the rectory rather than to their relations at Adlestrop Park.

Elizabeth never married and did not live with her brother and Mary until 1788. Her presence at the Parsonage was noted by their neighbour Agnes Witts in her diary:

Tuesday Feb 10<sup>th</sup> 1789

...dropped Mr Witts at Chip:& went to Adlestrop to make a visit to Mrs Thos Leigh, more agreeable than usual by the addition of Mrs Elizabeth Leigh, a very chearfull pleasant old maid<sup>12</sup>

Elizabeth may have remained a spinster because she spent some years looking after an elderly aunt, Elizabeth Wentworth in Hendon, or as Mary Leigh puts it, 'rocking the reposing cradle of Mrs Wentworth's great age'. When Mrs Wentworth

died at ninety-two she divided her ‘affluent property’ between her nephew Thomas, and her niece Elizabeth. During her lifetime she had supported her other nephew, James Leigh, helping him to rebuild a part of the front of Adlestrop House and giving him a sum ‘sufficient to build two farmhouses’ – perhaps Fern Farm and Hillside Farm (formerly called Parsonage Farm) which lie just outside the heart of the village on the western side. It is thanks to James and his choice of Sanderson Miller as an architect that the exquisite southwest frontage of Adlestrop Park was erected and although his own son uprooted his cherished garden, this at least remains as a suitable epitaph to his vision and taste.



*The innovative gothic frontage of Adlestrop Park created for James Leigh  
by the architect Sanderson Miller*

Elizabeth is always referred to as Mrs E. Leigh by Jane – the Mrs was purely a mark of respect due to her age. The initial ‘E’ distinguishes her from ‘Mrs Leigh’ – the Hon. Mary Leigh of Stoneleigh Abbey, also mentioned in the letters. Sometimes Jane just mentions as an aside ‘I have written to Mrs E. Leigh too’, without specifying why but perhaps to save Cassandra the trouble of doing so.<sup>13</sup> In 1799 Jane is obviously trying to avoid a visit to Adlestrop as she writes to Cassandra from Bath:

I wonder what we shall do with all our intended visits this summer?—I should like to make a compromise with Adlestrop, Harden [or Harpsden, home of her cousin and rector, Edward Cooper] & Bookham [home of Samuel Cooke, also rector and Jane's godfather] that Martha's spending the summer at Steventon should be considered as our respective visits to them all.<sup>14</sup>

Rather than getting news direct from the family at Adlestrop Park it seems to have come through Elizabeth: 'My Mother has heard from Mrs E. Leigh—Lady S & S- and her daughter are going to remove to Bath.'<sup>15</sup> This refers to Lady Saye & Sele and her divorced daughter Mary Cassandra Twisleton who was the sister of Julia, the wife of James Henry Leigh. When all the difficulties of the Stoneleigh inheritance were in full swing she made a point of telling Cassandra, 'Mrs E. Leigh did not make the slightest allusion to my Uncle's Business as I remember telling you at the time but you shall hear it as often as you like. My Mother wrote to her a week ago.'<sup>16</sup>

In her mid-eighties Elizabeth fell ill and Jane was quick to send news of this to Cassandra with all the close detail that the sisters liked to exchange:

This post bought me two very interesting Letters, Yours & one from Bookham, in answer to an enquiry of mine about your good Godmother, of whom we had lately received a very alarming account from Paragon. Miss Arnold was the Informant there, & she spoke of Mrs E.L.'s having been very dangerously ill & attended by a physician from Oxford.—Your Letter to Adlestrop may perhaps bring you information from the spot, but in case it should not, I must tell you that she is better, tho' Dr Bourne cannot yet call her out of danger.

Jane goes on to more particulars:

Her disorder is an Inflammation on the Lungs, arising from a severe Chill, taken in Church last Sunday three weeks;—her Mind, all pious Composure, as may be supposed.—George Cooke was there when her Illness began, his Brother has now taken his place.—Her age & feebleness considered, one's fear cannot but preponderate—tho' her amendment has already surpassed the expectation of her Physician.

She adds a further titbit of news about Elizabeth's maidservant, Rebecca Cadwallader: 'I am sorry to add that Becky is laid up with a complaint of the same kind.'

In the same long letter – written over the course of two days from Southampton – Jane ends by adding: 'As we have no letter from Adlestrop, we may suppose the good Woman was alive on Monday, but I cannot help expecting bad news from thence or Bookham, in a few days.'<sup>17</sup>



Two weeks later she writes with happy tidings of Elizabeth's recovery: 'She, good Woman, is I hope destined for some further placid enjoyment of her own Excellence in this World, for her recovery advances exceedingly well.—I had this pleasant news from Bookham last Thursday.'<sup>18</sup> A few days later she remarks: 'Mrs E.L. is so much recovered as to get into the Dressing-room every day.'<sup>19</sup> In fact Elizabeth did not die until she was ninety-three. Jane wrote to her niece Caroline on this occasion:

The note to your Papa, is to announce the death of that excellent woman Mrs Elizth Leigh; it came this morning enclosed in a Letter to Aunt Cassandra.—We all feel that we have lost a most valued old freind, but the death of a person at her advanced age, so fit to die, & by her own feelings so *ready* to die, is not to be regretted.—She has been so kind as to leave a little remembrance £20- to your Grandmama.<sup>20</sup>

In fact, it is rare that Jane spoke so warmly about her relations but every time she mentions Elizabeth it is to point out her goodness, her excellence and her value as an old friend.

Elizabeth is buried in Adlestrop Church in the family vault adjoining her brother and his wife. The tablet on the south of the chancel simply states: 'Elizabeth Leigh daughter of William Leigh born 17 November 1733 died 18 April 1816'.

### **James Henry (1765-1823) and Julia Leigh (1771-1843)**

James Henry Leigh was first educated at Odiham School in Hampshire before boarding at Winchester school. Both these schools were close to the magnificent Palladian mansion of Avington Park, the ducal country seat where his mother Lady Caroline and her brother, the Duke of Chandos, preferred to live. It is also very near to Steventon but there is no evidence that there were visits between these cousins, whereas the connection between the Leighs and the Chandos family continued for many years – in 1812, Lady Caroline's niece wrote in a letter to a friend: 'All the Leighs have been here till yesterday when they returned to Adlestrop where I hope (please God) to join them & spend some days there.' When he was an undergraduate at Christchurch College, Oxford James Henry and his mother spent the long summer holiday in Adlestrop, to introduce him 'by degrees into the great world and to familiarise him to his country neighbours ... upon his coming of age (and spent most hospitably and celebrated here) Adlestrop became his chief residence.'<sup>21</sup>

It must have been a definite shock to the system for James Henry and his aristocratic mother to return to Adlestrop Park, a house considerably smaller and far less grand than the ducal residences. It is probable that James Henry's closeness to his mother's family gave him great confidence and perhaps a touch of hauteur. Like a true hero, he was to fall violently in love at first sight with his cousin, the teenage daughter of Lord Saye & Sele, Julia Judith Twisleton, when she accompanied her parents on a social visit to the Adlestrop rectory: 'On entering –

he was instantaneously shot! – shot in a vital part by the mischievous wicked eyes of his fair cousin – the Sorceress was not quite fifteen.’<sup>22</sup> Mary Leigh described their wedding in 1786 at Broughton Castle, near Banbury in Oxfordshire, the family seat of Lord Saye & Sele, as ‘quite a Richardsonian Wedding.’<sup>23</sup> (This aside would have intrigued Jane as she adored the works of Samuel Richardson and had almost learnt *Sir Charles Grandison* off by heart according to her nephew, James Edward Austen-Leigh in his *Memoir*, and even went so far as to remind her family of Sir Charles’s wedding anniversary on the appropriate day.<sup>24</sup>)

Broughton Castle was described by Sir Charles Oman as ‘about the most beautiful castle in all England ... for sheer loveliness of the combination of water, woods and picturesque buildings.’ Julia was very young to be married, or even to be ‘out’ in society, but her husband was only six years older than her and, at the time, early marriage age for a young woman was a cause for celebration rather than censure, as can be seen from Mrs Bennet’s pride when Lydia is to be married – despite the scandalous circumstances of her elopement with Wickham: ‘she was only sixteen last June’. Julia must have been proud of her heritage and by all accounts, she, like her mother, became a formidable woman. Lord Saye & Sele, a hero of the British army for his help in quelling the Gordon Riots in 1780, committed suicide just two years after his daughter’s wedding.<sup>25</sup>

While the Austens were at Adlestrop Rectory, the young newly-weds were keeping Adlestrop Park full of visitors and entertaining the neighbouring gentry. In an exceptional cold and icy January in 1789 they cheered up their friends and their house guests with amateur dramatics on three separate evenings; plays were performed on a makeshift stage in their drawing room. The first drama chosen was *Matilda* – the same play that Jane Austen’s elder brothers performed one Christmas at Steventon in an old barn fitted out for the purpose; the contrivances used for staging a play at Adlestrop Park by converting the drawing room into a mock theatre were nearer to the improvised ploys at Mansfield Park. Adlestrop Park’s theatrical evenings sound amusing and diverting, as Agnes Witts, who lived in Swerford Park near Chipping Norton, recorded on 9 January 1789 when she and her husband had a wonderful night out:

dining early to go to the Play at Adlestrop, with which we were far more entertain’d than expected ... the Drawing Room made a tolerable good Theatre tho the stage was too small: 24 Spectators out of the Neighbourhood ...<sup>26</sup>

Both at Adlestrop Park and later at Stoneleigh Abbey, Julia spent large sums of money on improvements to the interiors; she also did her duty and produced an heir when her only child, Chandos Leigh, was born in Harley Street in 1791. According to Julia’s grandson Edward, she was ‘inclined to be too managing’ and both her husband and son lived in some fear of her disapproval.<sup>27</sup>

James Henry was a Member of Parliament from 1802 until 1823; he first represented the constituencies of Marlborough and Great Bedwyn, both under the control of his kinsman the Earl of Ailesbury, and then from 1818 until his death

he was the member for Winchester in the interest of his cousin, the Marquess of Buckingham.<sup>28</sup> This was before the Reform Act of 1832 when the Rotten Borough of Great Bedwyn was among many to be abolished. Rotten Boroughs and Pocket Boroughs were controlled by peers who gave their seats to their relatives or friends, to ensure that landed interests were protected in the House of Commons; it was a system remarkably similar to the presentation of livings in the Church of England – both depending on family patronage.

The Leighs of Adlestrop were cousins who were worth cultivating by the Austens for help and influence as well as for being agreeable and entertaining hosts. Their long lineage, their houses and their circumstances and, above all, the improvements undertaken in the village were all observed keenly by Jane Austen, and knowing more about the family and her time in Gloucestershire gives us some glimpses into the real world that lies behind the enchantment of her books.

### Notes

- 1 SBTRO 671/677 (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust).
- 2 Le Faye, D. ed, *Jane Austen's Letters*, pbk edn, 1997. Letter 87, 15-16 September 1813 and Letter 98 5-8 March 1814.
- 3 SBTRO 671/677.
- 4 SBTRO 617/77.
- 5 L.86 to Francis Austen 3-6 July 1813.
- 6 Note by her husband, SBTRO 671/677.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ch. 6.
- 9 Letter from Lady Knatchbull to her sister Marianne. First printed in the *Cornhill* magazine, 973, Winter 1947/8.
- 10 Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life*, London, 1997.
- 11 SBTRO 671/677.
- 12 *The Complete Diary of a Cotswold Lady*, Vol. 1, 10 February 1789.
- 13 L.12 to Cassandra Austen, 1-2 December 1798.
- 14 L.21 to Cassandra Austen, 11 June 1799.
- 15 L.27 to Cassandra Austen, 20-21 November 1800.
- 16 L.50 to Cassandra Austen, 8-9 February 1807.
- 17 L.64 to Cassandra Austen, 10-11 January 1809.
- 18 L.66 to Cassandra Austen, 24 January 1809.
- 19 L.67 to Cassandra Austen, 30 January 1809.
- 20 L.140 to Caroline Austen, 21 April 1816.
- 21 SBTRO 671/77.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Mavis Batey, *Jane Austen and the English Landscape*, London, 1996.
- 25 *Daily Mail*, 17.10.2009 Article by Ranulf Fiennes: On 1 July 1788 the seventh Baron Saye & Sele killed himself in Harley Street after being told there was no cure for his constant headaches by slashing his throat with a razor and falling on his regimental sword.

- 26 *The Complete Diary of a Cotswold Lady*, Vol 1, 9 January 1789, Gloucestershire 2011.
- 27 Sir Edward Chandos Leigh, *Bar, Bat & Bit*, London, 1913.
- 28 *Stoneleigh Abbey: The House, Its Owners, Its Lands* ed. Robert Bearman, ch.7 'The Poet and the Paternalist', Norma Hampson, Warwickshire, 2004.

*Adapted extract from Jane Austen and Adlestrop: Her Other Family by Victoria Huxley (victoriama.huxley@gmail.com)*

*Akin to Jane – an Austen family website:  
Joan Corder's pioneering, unpublished, genealogical study of  
1953, now available on a new website.*

Ronald Dunning

A brief announcement of the presentation of a manuscript, titled *Akin to Jane*, appeared in the Jane Austen Society's *Annual Report* for 1953; it was the first major work by Joan Corder, and the first thorough record of the descendants of George and Cassandra Austen. Her benefactions had already been acknowledged in earlier *Reports* – in 1951, for the coloured sketch of an Officer of the Oxford Militia (in which Henry Austen had served); and in 1952, for a printed list (presumably the one we know of, which includes Henry's name) and, outstandingly, 'the Sultan of Turkey's Medal commemorating the capture of St. Jean d'Acre, probably that presented to Charles John Austen' (the name printed in the *Report* was Charles James Austen, a surprising lapse on the part of the proof-reader). Her name appeared once more, in 1954, for the gift of a volume of the *Historical Report of the 86th Foot*, a regiment that took Henry's interest; this volume, for 1794, included Charles Austen, a chaplain, but in fact he wasn't a relation.

Joan Kersey Corder was born near Ipswich in 1921, and lived in Suffolk until in 2004 her god-daughter took her to live with her near Portsmouth; she died in April 2005. During WWII Joan spent four years as a plotter in the WAAF, then returned to her family home to keep house for her widowed mother and to work on *Akin to Jane*. Having completed it, she spent the next four years visiting every Suffolk church, taking photographs for her *Effigy Monuments in Suffolk*. In 1957 she started work on a new *Dictionary of Suffolk Arms*, which was published in



*Joan Corder in  
her library*

1967, and completed a definitive edition of the *Visitation of Suffolk for 1561* between 1965 and 1973. She was elected FSA in 1967. Her achievements as a herald and genealogist were well recognised; thanks to her, Suffolk is better served for heraldic reference than any other county in the British Isles. She established methods of working for large surveys that have become the standard.

She was never able to interest a publisher in *Akin to Jane*, to her enduring regret, but the Society's copy, now housed at Jane Austen's House Museum in Chawton, has been in regular use, and consulted by every one of Jane's biographers. Now that the original has become too fragile for handling, I am making it available on the internet for everyone to use. Images of the original pages in her legible and comfortable hand are displayed, accompanied by a transcription which is fully indexed and cross-linked, and can be found by internet search engines. The address of the site is [www.janeaustensfamily.co.uk](http://www.janeaustensfamily.co.uk). It has, as yet, no graphical design – it has taken considerable time to edit the document, and any further delay in announcing the site until I add a design would mean another year before making it available.

There is a particular reason for my interest in this project: Jane's brother Frank was my 4th-great-grandfather. Being a keen genealogist, I have a wonderful family to study; I plan to develop the site over time, first by adding more unpublished material, and articles on interesting family connections. I would also like viewers to be able to use my extension of Joan's work. It has been said that it would have been dangerous to mention, in her presence, the use of more modern tools than a pencil, an ancient typewriter, and boxes of card indexes; and yet, relying on postal correspondence with family members, she was able to record some 330 descendants of George and Cassandra, plus spouses. By embracing all of the 21st-century genealogical resources to supplement hours of research in dusty archives, I have recorded at least another 900.

My Austen family tree can be found at <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~janeausten> and there is a link from every entry on the *Akin to Jane* pages to the same individual in this tree. Neither Joan Corder's manuscript nor the Jane Austen family tree is meant to be read from start to finish. In the manuscript there are many pages containing no more information than the dates of vital events, but on others there are wonderful treasures of family biography. My tree has hidden functions which can give an extensive overview of the various family lines, but will need to be explained. There is a page of useful advice on the site, which in addition will direct the reader to the most delightful family records in the manuscript. With further development of the [janeaustensfamily](http://www.janeaustensfamily.co.uk) site's design I will be able to program better ways to access the hidden functions.

The delightful records that I mentioned were provided by Miss Marcia Rice, who in 1953 was 84 years old. She was the grand-daughter of Elizabeth Knight, and the great-granddaughter of Edward; memories of her childhood were refracted through lenses of the purest and most intense tint of rose. Joan Corder included some thoughts from one of Miss Rice's letters, and I will let her words conclude this article.

## ‘Jane Austen and Three Generations’

By Miss Marcia Rice

No doubt my generation is the last to call Jane Austen ‘Aunt Jane’ quite naturally; and, for all I know, to some of my cousins she may have become just the celebrated novelist, ‘Miss Austen.’

But my father and his two maiden sisters were steeped in her works, and read them with a pride in their own ‘Aunt Jane.’ My father also had a great interest in people and in families, and though he never met Jane’s sister and brothers who outlived her, he knew all there was to know about them from her nephew, J.E. Austen-Leigh’s *Memoir* – and certainly must have become familiar with many facts concerning them through talks with his mother and his ‘Aunt Knatchbull’, of whom he was very fond. At any rate, he talked to me of them with interest, as his relations of a past generation – and it was always ‘Aunt Cassandra’ and ‘Aunt Jane.’

I was introduced to Aunt Jane’s books by my father, who read *Pride and Prejudice* to me when I was in bed with measles, aged fourteen. How that hour of reading brightened the days! He read all Aunt Jane’s books to his family over and over again, and I myself went steadily through them all after my introduction to *Pride and Prejudice*.

I suppose my father and aunts were the first ‘Janeites’, I can’t answer for their brothers and sisters! But they were ‘Janeites’ in their own way – they knew her books almost by heart and the characters were as real to them as if they actually existed. They discussed them, and chose their favourite book – and then changed their minds. They were no literary critics, it may even be that they were a little jealous of Miss Austen’s growing fame (this applied rather to my Aunt Caroline than the others). They all considered her their exclusive family possession, a very rare and precious one.

But my aunt went further, ‘Grandmama read Aunt Jane as no one else could.’ This was because she was her niece and could enter into the whole atmosphere of the wit and setting of the books. The next generation followed, but there was a difference. When my generation came along we were allowed a share in the family relationship, but were not expected, indeed hardly permitted, to appreciate our great-great-aunt’s writing as those nearer her could. In fact, if we were ‘Janeites’, it must be in the modern fashion. All the same, my Aunt Caroline was both angry and indignant when one day, happening to be in a literary mood, I chanced to speak of ‘Miss Austen’ instead of ‘Aunt Jane’!

*I would like to thank Patrick Stokes, who provided the first scanned version of Akin to Jane, and to acknowledge the assistance of Dr John Blatchly, chairman of the Suffolk Records Society, who allowed me to quote from his biographical material on Joan Corder. I welcome correspondence about the Austen pedigree, and about the many families associated with the Austens. My email address is [ronald@janeaustensfamily.co.uk](mailto:ronald@janeaustensfamily.co.uk).*

# *Jane Austen's Trinity Boys*

Chris Viveash

James Edward Austen-Leigh in *A Memoir of Jane Austen* makes mention of his brother-in-law Sir Denis Le Marchant's anecdote concerning his old college. He writes: 'When I was a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, Mr Whewell, then a Fellow and afterwards Master of the College, often spoke to me with admiration of Miss Austen's novels. On one occasion I said that I had found "Persuasion" rather dull. He quite fired up in defence of it, insisting that it was the most beautiful of her works.'<sup>1</sup> William Whewell, known to the irreverent Trinitarians as 'Billy Whistle', was a tall, powerful man whose massive virility was often remarked upon, as was his speech, which was considered rustic. Nevertheless, his governance of the largest and wealthiest college in Cambridge was remarkable.

The astonishing sweep of Whewell's knowledge was matched by his legendary rudeness to undergraduates. He once caught a youth taking a furtive puff of a cigar in the great Court and immediately propounded the fearful dilemma: 'Do you mean, sir, to deliberately insult me, or are you totally lost to a sense of decency?' The wretched young man made the best reply, saying: 'If you please, Sir, I am totally lost to a sense of decency.'<sup>2</sup> (The erudite Revd Sydney Smith quipped that science was Whewell's forte, but omniscience his foible.)



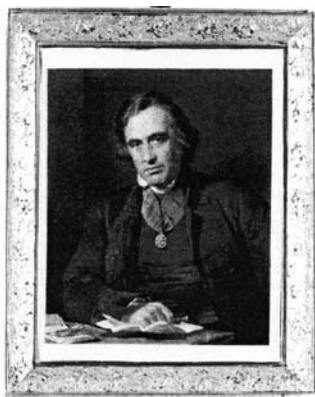
Undergraduates in the early nineteenth century at Trinity College wore a purple gown, topped by a tasselled trencher cap and set off by knee-breeches and white stockings. They wore this garb even after a day's ramble in their free time. The exhausted youths would then enjoy a savoury steak sent hot from the cook's shop washed down with Trinity's amber-flowing ale.<sup>3</sup> Later pupils heartily disliked stockings, favouring nankeen trousers instead. An elderly don who spotted Charles Richard Sumner in these offending garments shouted: '... young



*Charles Richard Sumner*



*Alfred Tennyson*



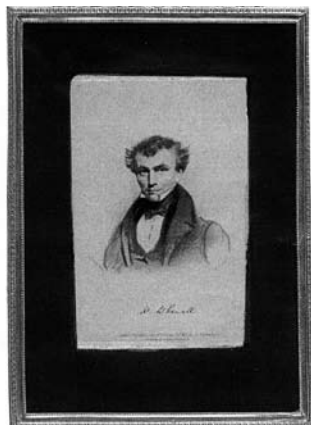
*Richard Chevenix Trench*



*Thomas Babington Macaulay*



*William Whewell*



*William Whewell*



man you'll never come to any good. You wear nankeen trousers and keep a dog.' Sumner defied this awful prediction by becoming Bishop of Winchester at the age of 37, through his patroness, the Marchioness of Conyngham. Sumner had joined the Conyngham family through Trinity College contacts in the persons of Lord Mount Charles and Lord Francis Conyngham, who rejoiced to have Sumner as their tutor.<sup>4</sup>



*Interior of the hall*

Alfred Tennyson entered Trinity College in 1827, the very antithesis of a future poet of genius. He was over six feet tall, of powerful build with a head of fine black hair and the colouring of a gypsy. The extreme dirtiness of his shirt was remarked upon, as was his addiction to clay pipes and strong tobacco which he had used since his fourteenth year! He resented in later life the quest to find every intimate detail of a writer's life, and rejoiced that he and Jane Austen had 'not been ripped open like pigs.' Lyme Regis beckoned him when he was in the Dorset area, and so, with Francis Palgrave, they raced to the Cobb to discover the spot where Jane Austen's fictional drama took place. To imagine the moment when Louisa Musgrove fell insensible at Captain Wentworth's feet! Luckily Palgrave had already traced out many other local features described in Miss Austen's *Persuasion* which they could explore together.<sup>5</sup>

The ever thoughtful William Whewell recommended another undergraduate, William Henry Brookfield, as tutor to the eldest son of William Henry, 3rd Baron Lyttelton, of Hagley Hall. This young sprig of the nobility, George William Lyttelton, wrote from Trinity College: 'Novelties at Cambridge there are not many. Whewell will shortly emit a gigantic History of Science, which will be the death

of many and the perplexity of more – but the wonderment of all.’ Later in life William Henry Brookfield’s wife was seated next to Lord Macaulay at a dinner, and asked him if he admired Jane Austen’s works. He wrote: ‘Mrs Brookfield has asked me if I admire Jane Austen’s novels, to which I reply’ and then entered into a lengthy dissertation to which all listened but into which no one dared intrude, finally describing how sometime ago he had found himself by the plain marble slab which covers the remains of Jane Austen, when he said to himself ‘Here’s a woman who ought to have had a National Monument.’<sup>6</sup>

Thomas Babington Macaulay was an enthusiastic scholar of Trinity, and the college retained his affection and loyalty throughout his life. He went into residence at the college in 1818, and immediately took up with Henry Thornton, who proved to be a lively companion throughout his university career. A Parliamentary election was taking place when they were living together in lodgings, and Macaulay dragged his friend into the violent fray, racing along with a mob who were breaking windows and causing mayhem. At a local hotel where one of the candidates was staying, Macaulay was enjoying himself hugely, until a dead cat hit him full in the face! It had been thrown by a local ruffian who had the grace to admit it had been intended for one of the candidates.<sup>7</sup>



*Trinity Scholar 1832*

The following year Macaulay won the Chancellor’s Medal at the Cambridge Commencement of 1819 for his epic poem, *Pompeii*. Also, this brilliant youth won a Trinity scholarship and a Craven scholarship. It is most gratifying that he should later give the most profound and graceful assessment of Jane Austen’s

pre-eminent position in world literature. Macaulay visited Cambridge with his sisters, in 1831, meeting William Whewell, before moving on to Oxford. The girls sighed for Cambridge, finding Oxford dull and flat, longing to be back at Trinity College. There was a delightful bond between Macaulay and his sisters – they all used the very language of Mrs Elton and Mrs Bennet, Mr Woodhouse, Mr Collins and all the inimitable actors on Jane Austen's stage on matters of the street or of the household.

It was in 1831 that Macaulay dined at Lansdowne House with Lord and Lady Lansdowne, and heard them praising Jane Austen and deciding that 'the test of a true Austenian was *Emma*.' Macaulay was deeply shocked to hear a Trinity student, William Wilberforce Pearson, describe *Emma* as a vulgar book, that same year! Macaulay, when he was Member of Parliament for Calne, enjoyed gifts of cheese from his Wiltshire constituents (probably the 'north Wiltshire' mentioned in *Emma*) and audit ale from Trinity College reminding him he was still a Fellow of Trinity. (Audit ale was a very special brew for use on the day of the college audit only.)<sup>8</sup>

Trinity College was intensely proud of having Francis Bacon as a previous alumnus of the college. He was championed by later students of Trinity such as James Spedding, a young man who 'spoke of Jane Austen... as next to Shakespeare.' Thomas Carlyle referred to Spedding as *Baco Redivivus* [Bacon Revived] and Tennyson described him as 'the wisest man I know.' William Whewell proudly reviewed Spedding's complete works of Francis Bacon for the *Edinburgh Review*, in 1866. However, Spedding's ardour for the novels of Jane Austen was never in doubt, while his few essays on Shakespearian criticisms are amongst the best in our language.

Another of Tennyson's friends at Trinity College was Richard Chenevix Trench. 'It is impossible to look upon Trench and not to love him,' said the poet. 'We know that Trench's daughter married Cholmeley Austen Leigh, and that Trench had been raised to the eminence of Archbishop of Dublin; also that his half-brother, Charles Manners St. George, criticised *Pride and Prejudice* to their mother, Melesina, in a most interesting letter of 1815.'<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, we did not realise that Chenevix Trench set off from Trinity College to fight for a losing liberal revolution, in Spain. Trench artlessly revealed later that 'they passed their time smoking and drinking ale ... holding forth loudly upon German metaphysics ... as the tobacco fumes grew thick and his glass empty.' Trench did not like to be reminded of this raucous escapade when he assumed the dignity of the Archbishop of Dublin.<sup>10</sup>

William Whewell was a canny and adroit Master of Trinity when he permitted Alfred de Rothschild to be excused attendance at chapel as the youth claimed to have no sympathy with Christian prayers. Later generations of scholars benefited when Lord Rothschild donated a large library, particularly rich in 18th-century first editions and Swift manuscripts, to Trinity College. 'Shakespeare has had neither equal nor second. But among the writers who, in the point which we have noticed, have approached nearest to the manner of the great master, we have no hesitation

in placing Jane Austen, a woman of whom England is justly proud.’<sup>11</sup> This was written by Macaulay in January 1843; four years later William Whewell wrote to his favourite pupil Alfred Tennyson asking him to compose a suitable ode for the installation of H.R.H. The Prince Consort as Chancellor of the University, a request which poor Tennyson felt unequal to granting. This did not cast a shadow over the two men’s friendship, as they met again for a lively reunion in 1857.

Tragically, the Master of Trinity, Dr William Whewell, who did so much for Trinity College, suffered the same death as Mrs Lefroy, Jane Austen’s respected friend. He fell from his horse and was killed, soon after preaching his last sermon in the college chapel, in 1866. His death excited a wide felt shock among Cambridge men all over the world, who had associated him with their recollections of the University. He alone represented Cambridge learning and Cambridge dignity. He revered the works of Jane Austen, despite that lady not holding Cambridge University alumni in high regard. The only Cambridge scholar mentioned in her works is a questionable young rogue named George Wickham. This promiscuous and shameless imposter succeeded in seducing one virginal girl and compromising another during the course of *Pride and Prejudice*; but the reprobate’s alma mater was not mentioned, and no amount of persuasion would allow us to concede that Trinity College, Cambridge was to be named thus.

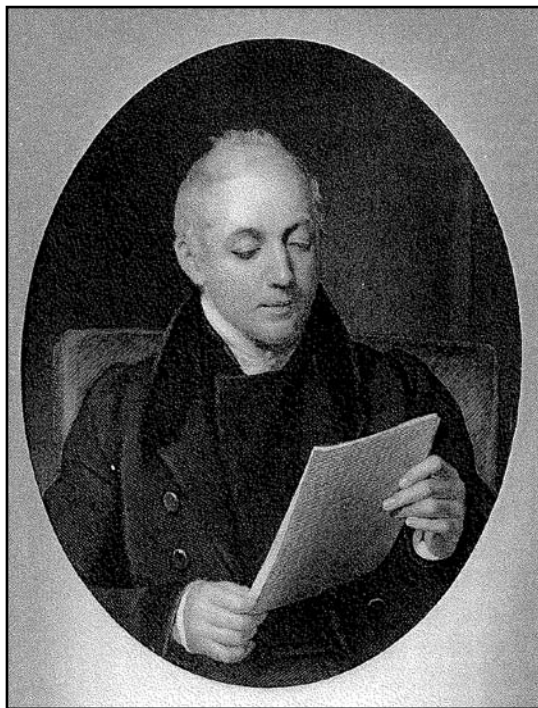
#### Notes

- 1 Austen-Leigh, J. E., *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (London, 1870), pp. 188-87.
- 2 Rouse Ball, W.W., *Trinity College, Cambridge* (London, 1906), p. 96.
- 3 Moultrie, J., *The Dream of Life* (London, 1843), pp. 87-97.
- 4 Sumner, Rev. G. H., *Life of Charles Richard Sumner*, (London, 1876), pp. 12-13.
- 5 Tennyson, C., *Alfred Tennyson* (London, 1949), pp. 56-57, 339-40, 372-73. It was on this occasion when Tennyson said: ‘Don’t talk to me of the Duke of Monmouth. Show me the exact spot where Louisa Musgrove fell.’ He didn’t wish to see where Monmouth had landed! Park Honan *Jane Austen* (London, 1987), p. 202.
- 6 Brookfield, C. & F., *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle* (London, 1905), Vol. 1. p. 24, Vol. 2. p. 377.
- 7 Trevelyan, G. O. *The Life & Letters of Lord Macaulay* (London, 1881), pp. 53-4.
- 8 Ibid., pp. 95-127.
- 9 Le Faye, Deirdre, ‘Son of Melesina – Charles Manners St. George’, *The Female Spectator*. Vol. 10, No. 3. (Chawton, 2006), pp. 1-3.
- 10 Furnas, J. C., *Fanny Kemble*. (New York, 1982), pp. 79-80, 450.
- 11 Macaulay, Lord., *Literary Essays Contributed to the Edinburgh Review*, (Oxford, 1923), p. 590.

*I am indebted to both Jonathan Smith, the Archivist of Trinity College, Cambridge, and to David Gilson; both have given me invaluable advice in the preparation of this article.*

## *Jane Austen's dealings with her publishers*

Tony Corley



*John Murray*

In his 'Biographical Notice' on Jane Austen, written five months after she died, her brother Henry maintained that 'it was with extreme difficulty that her friends ... could prevail on her to publish her first work'. According to him, 'she became an authoress entirely from taste and inclination', from the outset seeking 'neither fame nor profits' (Sutherland, 2002, 140). On the contrary, this article offers evidence that she acted positively, even decisively, in seeking to bring her novels before the public, and hence to acquire earnings she could not obtain from any other source.

As to an early work, she had raised no objection when in 1797 their father, George Austen, had made an unsuccessful bid to interest Thomas Cadell, a London publisher, in *First Impressions*. Likewise, it was Henry's own attorney, William Seymour, who had in 1803 sold the manuscript of *Susan* to Benjamin Crosby & Co., of Stationers Court, London. Henry must have learnt of her disappointment when after six years, *Susan* had never appeared. Shortly before her household's removal to Chawton in 1809, she wrote a severe and businesslike letter to Crosby's son, Richard, about his firm's failure to publish (Viveash, 1997, 10-11). Her

remonstrations, not the last to an apparently slothful publisher, yielded the offer to return the manuscript for £10, one which Seymour was to take up in 1816. Ever since her schooldays, after devouring perhaps dozens of trashy novels which she soon afterwards began to parody, she seems to have possessed an extraordinary compulsion to write, at first sharing her tales with members of the family (Corley, 1996, 17; 2006, 13); as an adult, she was eager to see those works in print.

After Jane Austen took up full-time writing again at Chawton, her letters should properly have contained plentiful information about publishers. However, her surviving correspondence contains only sporadic references to this topic, lengthy gaps occurring for critical periods. No letters survive to or from Henry, the go-between with publishers as a businessman based in London, where nine-tenths of all British books were published at that time (Raven, 2005, 196). It remained to be seen whether, to be effective, he had enough experience of commerce apart from that of banking, where he had already been accustomed to make easy money out of secret and illegal dealings (Caplan, 2010, 103-9). He would be up against hard-headed publishers, whose livelihoods depended on judgment, knowledge of the market and often tough negotiating skills.

### **Egerton as Jane Austen's first publisher**

A year after her arrival in Chawton, Henry secured his sister's first publisher (Gilson, 1986, 135-9). That was Thomas Egerton, who owned a Military Library in London's Whitehall, close to the Horse Guards, then the headquarters of the British army (Viveash, 1997, 10-15; Fergus, 1991, 130ff; Hodge, 1972, 122ff.). Born at Westminster in November 1749, he and his brother John (d. 1794/5) had become booksellers in the early 1780s, about the time when they published their first titles. He specialised in works on military topics, including finance, and despatched both official and recreational matter to forces serving overseas. In 1810, he brought out a *New Military Map of Portugal*, where Fortnum & Mason in Piccadilly was keeping Sir Arthur Wellesley's officers, campaigning behind the Torres Vedras lines, supplied with food hampers (Corley, 2004, 472-3).

Henry already knew Egerton, who in 1789-90 had been the distributor in London and the home counties of James Austen's and his periodical, *The Loiterer*. Henry could well have purchased books from the Library while acting as adjutant and paymaster of his militia regiment (Gilson, 1997, 8). The unmarried and sexagenarian Egerton had not so far published any novels, Jane Austen being one of only six authors whose fiction was to bear his imprint (Rogers, 2006, 438). Whether or not she visited London during the winter of 1810, Henry opened talks with him, offering an updated version of *Elinor and Marianne*, now given the more marketable title of *Sense and Sensibility*, on which she had been working over the past year.

It is not clear why Egerton in February 1811 consented to bring out *Sense and Sensibility* for this unknown author on a 10 per cent commission basis (Fergus, 1991, 130). A newcomer to fiction, he would have been expected to follow his fellow-publishers' practice of buying all copyrights. Jane Austen must have

vetoed the idea, smarting as she did over being let down by Crosby over *Susan*. That commission system was to become the norm for all except one of her future publishing deals. Henry found himself having to pay out some £180 for expenses on paper and advertising costs for the 750-1,000 copies ordered (Letters, 8 Nov. 1813). The novel's three volumes cost 15 shillings.

A delay of eight months, during which she concentrated on *Mansfield Park*, proved to be a frustrating wait for her and for Henry, who both wrote indignant letters of complaint. Charles Roworth, of Bell Yard, near Temple Bar in the Strand (Todd, 1972, 166), was taking his time in printing the three volumes, while Egerton, having no direct interest in a commission-only work, is unlikely to have supported their vexation. Not until the end of October 1811 did Jane Austen realise every author's dream, of handling her first published book.

### **The troublesome birth of *Pride and Prejudice***

In the later months of 1811 and possibly into 1812, Jane Austen put aside *Mansfield Park* – which took longer to write than any other novel of hers – in order to convert *First Impressions* into *Pride and Prejudice*. As she appears to have spent practically the whole of 1812 in Chawton, it must have been Henry who in November dealt with Egerton on his own. Somehow the publisher prevailed on him to sell the copyright for £110. Jane Austen's reaction, in a letter to Martha Lloyd, was that she would have preferred £150 (Letters, 29 Nov. 1812); yet she never allowed that to happen again. 'She knew she was being cheated' (Chapman, 1930, 340).

Egerton at once strove to make the most of what was, for him, a highly advantageous deal, printing an estimated 1,500 copies. In January 1813 Jane learnt that he intended to charge 18 rather than 15 shillings a copy, provoking a rare outburst of exasperation when writing home (Letters, 19 Jan. 1813). She could not have known that the costs of paper and of printing generally had been steadily forcing up book prices, from 12 shillings on average at the beginning of the century (Raven, 2005, 197); *Emma* in 1816 would sell at 21 shillings. To keep down his own costs, Egerton used thin paper, while he entrusted the printing of Volumes 2 and 3 to Gabriel Sidney, of Northumberland Street, near Charing Cross. Whether or not Sidney was cheaper to employ, the standard of his work proved to be appreciably below that of Roworth's in Volume 1. Moreover, Volume 3 contained the 'blunder in the Printing' noted by Jane Austen and never set right in her lifetime, where two speeches were carelessly run together. It is a supreme irony that the work she most cherished, and one of the most popular literary novels in English, was never seen by Jane Austen in a decent enough format. She felt equally aggrieved to be told nothing about the novel's second edition, which appeared in June 1813; some corrections were made but not of the 'blunder'. Egerton was to bring out a third edition in 1817, again without informing her, at a knock-down price of 12 shillings. It was printed by Roworth in two volumes.

*Sense and Sensibility* had sold out by July 1813, earning £140 for Jane

Austen. Egerton thereupon suggested a second edition, for which she was able to make corrections. That came out early in November, for 18 shillings, all three volumes being printed by Roworth. By then she had another novel almost ready for publication.

### ***Mansfield Park* and the breach with Egerton**

About the time when Jane Austen completed *Mansfield Park*, in June-July 1813, Henry was appointed Receiver-General of Taxes for Oxfordshire, thus reducing the amount of attention he could devote to his sister's publication affairs. Fortunately, when Egerton read that novel's manuscript, he praised it (in her words) for 'it's Morality, & for being so equal [i.e. even] a Composition. – No weak points'. She admitted that it was not as entertaining as *Pride and Prejudice*, but hoped that, on the strength of her earlier work, it would enjoy brisk sales.

In mid-November 1813, Jane Austen was in London, on the way home after staying with Edward Knight and his family in Godmersham, and she and Henry could have met him then. Apparently Egerton sought to buy that copyright, perhaps for £150, but had to be satisfied with another 'on-commission' arrangement. For some reason, the book was not published until May 1814, at 18 shillings a copy, but January had seen one of the hardest winters on record.

Once again, the standard of printing was poor, Sidney being responsible for volumes 1 and 3, and Roworth for volume 2. Even thinner paper was used, and each page contained 25 rather than 23 lines (Fergus, 1991, 145). The edition of 1,000-1,250 copies was sold out by the following autumn, perhaps because her literary reputation was attracting more buyers and circulating library users; it earned her a profit of between £310 and £347 (Fergus, 1991, 190-1). When sales began to decline towards the end, both Jane and Henry pressed for a second edition, but Egerton stood firm against the idea. When they met on 30 November 1814, aware that she had been writing *Emma* since January, he instead offered to buy its copyright.

As Jane Austen refused, the meeting ended in stalemate. Egerton had lately passed his 65th birthday, and showed an elderly man's obstinacy in pressing his demands, while she blamed him for not having had the energy to secure any reviews. She and Henry felt it was time to look for a fresh publisher. Egerton continued to run the Military Library until he died in 1830, aged 81, latterly lodging with his principal assistant and executor, Francis Pinkney. However, Jane Austen's years with him were not wasted ones. He had helped to turn her into an established author, and earned for her 94 per cent of the income she was looking to gain; moreover, he demonstrated a correct judgment in his arguments against reprinting *Mansfield Park*. However, he counted for so little in London's publishing community that no announcement of his death appeared in the *Annual Review*, the *Gentleman's Magazine* or *The Times*.

### **Towards John Murray**

Possibly after Egerton made his annual payment, amounting to £30, in March



1815, Jane Austen purchased £600 worth of ‘Navy Fives’, or 5 per cent bonds created by the government in 1784 to fund earlier naval victualling and transport expenses. As the market value of these securities was below par, she could then have bought them for about £532 (Fergus, 1991, 191). That sum was perhaps made up of the £110 received for the *Pride and Prejudice* copyright, £140 from *Sense and Sensibility* and part of the £320 or so from *Mansfield Park*. At last, her growing reputation was being matched by an acceptable income.

However, there are no existing letters between November 1814 and September 1815, the months between the final meeting with Egerton and the initial negotiations with a new, far younger and notably more prestigious publisher. All we know is that during March 1815 Jane Austen completed *Emma*, and began *Persuasion* in the following August.

Henry might have approached several firms; a partner of Longman, in Paternoster Row, who regularly took up copies of her works on publication, had expressed concern that those novels had not met ‘with the encouragement we would wish’ (Fergus, 1991, 188). Yet Henry found himself obsessively drawn to the nation’s top people. John Murray, at 36 not much more than half Egerton’s age, was balding, tallish and eminently gregarious, already a key figure in London’s literary life (Smiles, 1891, 1, 281-3; Viveash, 1995, 10-15). Celebrated as the publisher of such names as Lord Byron, Robert Southey and Isaac D’Israeli, he had built up an extensive range of works, from poetry and drama to travel literature, and even the *Navy List*, which features in *Persuasion* as a work which Henrietta and Louisa Musgrove had lately purchased for their home in Uppercross. Curiously enough, while Egerton had become official bookseller to the navy board, Murray advertised himself as ‘Bookseller to the Admiralty, and the Board of Longitude’, inspiring Byron’s ditty (McGann, 1986, 4 172, 493):

And then thou hast the ‘Navy List’ –  
My Murray. –  
And Heaven forbid I should conclude  
Without the ‘Board of Longitude’  
Although this narrow paper would –  
My Murray.

It was in Murray’s drawing room in Albemarle Street that authors and other selected visitors regularly congregated. He also had a kind of sanctum, above the book storage area, where a fortunate few were invited to read the newspapers and exchange gossip. His clubby set-up, mostly for men, antedated the foundation of the Athenaeum Club in 1824, but by then he was entertaining women writers ‘with generous hospitality and literary contacts’. Those included Maria Graham (Lady Callcott, author of the immensely popular *Little Arthur’s History of England*), Mme. de Staël, and later Mary Somerville and Elizabeth Rigby, the future Lady Eastlake (Onslow, 27).

Unlike Egerton, who relied on his own – and Pinkney’s – judgment, Murray

employed a team of readers. The most influential was William Gifford (1756-1816), remembered as short, deformed and ugly, at times spiteful and malevolent, but adept at spotting talent (Strachan, 2004, 149-52). Gifford, when sent a copy of *Pride and Prejudice*, found it 'a very pretty thing' even though 'wretchedly printed and so pointed [punctuated] as to be almost unintelligible'. Once shown the manuscript of *Emma*, he had 'nothing but good to say', whereas Murray, concerned with the potential market, had reservations about the novel on the ground that it 'wants incident and romance' (Smiles, 1891, 1, 282, 288).

Murray, who at that time published 'few works by women and very few novels' (Fergus, 1991, 158), saw no reason to be over-generous to Jane Austen, still not well enough known as a writer. All her six books came out anonymously, the first by 'A Lady' and the later ones by the 'Author' of a previous novel. Although she had been staying with Henry since 4 October 1815, she seems not to have had any direct contact with Murray until, on the 15th, he wrote to her offering to buy the copyrights not only of *Emma* but also of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Mansfield Park* for £450 in all, a sum which has been deemed 'fair, if not generous' (Fergus, 1991, 158). Jane, when passing on the news to Cassandra, at once dubbed him 'a Rogue of course, but a civil one', clever at composing 'an amusing letter' which contained more praise than she had expected (Letter, 17 Oct. 1815).

On the next day, Henry went down with a bilious attack, aggravated by fever probably brought on by anxiety that a combination of mismanagement and corruption in his Alton bank – which collapsed a month later – was forcing him to resign his partnership there. From his sickbed, he dictated to Jane a rambling reply to Murray's offer, stressing that the £450 was less than her earnings from a 'very moderate' edition of *Mansfield Park* and a still smaller one of *Sense and Sensibility*. That draft could never have been despatched, but placed to one side at a time when Henry's illness had reached a critical stage. As soon as she was able to catch up with less urgent matters, on 3 November she made her first reply to his offer of 15 October; that letter, although less forthright than the complaint sent to Crosby in 1809, demonstrated that she was by then quite capable of settling her own affairs. Making clear that Henry was far too sick to be harassed 'by any business', she requested the 'favour' of his calling on her, as 'a short conversation may perhaps do more than much writing'. In a mixture of bravado and ignorance, she expected a figure of Murray's distinction and commitments to make a journey of a mile or so across London (Letter, 3 Nov. 1815). Instead, he almost certainly sent a cab to convey her to Albemarle Street. Whatever his initial impression of this country-bred spinster, he must have warmed to the unusual brain power of one who later boldly questioned him on such matters as 'the terms on which the Trade should be supplied', and 'what [in his experience] is most likely to clear off the Edition' (Letter, 11 Dec. 1815). Not only did she decline to give up the copyrights of the two earlier novels, she also enticed him into publishing *Emma* and that work on commission, an exceptional arrangement in his firm (Fergus, 1991, 158). At the same time, she unwisely overruled his advice – the same as Egerton's – not to risk a second edition of *Mansfield Park*.

If Murray thought that the publication of *Emma* would be trouble-free, he was to be disappointed. Trouble arose when the newly recuperated Henry Austen, together with Jane, unreasonably wanted the novel to be ready by the end of November. On the 23rd, after some fruitless pleas from Henry, she wrote Murray a strong letter, expecting the book to be ready by the time she planned to leave London early in December (Letter, 23 Nov. 1815). Murray's emollient reply offered the excuse that Roworth, printer of volumes 1 and 2, was awaiting the delivery of suitable paper. As a goodwill gesture, he lent them two recently published works – one by an author of his, (Sir) Walter Scott – on the situation in France after Waterloo, and undertook to supply any other items in his current list they might choose to borrow (Letter, 24 Nov. 1815).

*Emma*, priced at 21 shillings and with a print run of 2,000 copies, appeared with reasonable despatch towards the end of December, the year of publication being given as 1816. It turned out to be the most costly of her novels to produce, at the expense of her eventual profits (Fergus, 1991, 157). On 11 December, Jane Austen had sent him a marked copy of the first edition of *Mansfield Park*, incorporating a range of amendments that included technical details such as the mooring of warships, which her brother Frank had provided. After a ten-week stay at Hans Place, she arrived back at Chawton on 16 December, her fortieth birthday, doubtless bringing with her an advance copy of *Emma*.

### **1816: Chawton without a summer**

As the New Year opened, Jane Austen must have looked forward to future enjoyable visits to Hans Place, with opportunities to strengthen a promising business relationship with John Murray, someone of roughly her own age. She was already half-way through *Persuasion*; when early in 1816 William Seymour on Henry Austen's behalf bought back the manuscript of *Susan* from Richard Crosby, she hoped that in the coming months she would have two novels to offer Murray.

Unknown to her, Murray had sought to generate additional publicity for *Emma* by requesting Walter Scott to 'dash off' a piece on that novel for the Murray-owned *Quarterly Review*. Scott's anonymous article, appearing in March, noted that her first two works had attracted much greater public attention than was normally given to 'ephemeral productions which supply the regular demand of watering places and circulating libraries'; indeed, they struck a new note by cleverly drawing on 'nature as she really exists in the common walks of life', which revealed her sophisticated knowledge of the world. In Brian Southam's judgment, Scott summed up her achievement as a 'turning-point in the progress of fiction' (Southam, 1968, 13, 58-69). When Murray lent her a copy of the issue containing that article, she thanked him but regretted that 'so clever a Man' as its unnamed author should have totally overlooked *Mansfield Park* (Letter, 1 Apr. 1816).

Jane Austen, never to discern her future place in history as a pioneer of the 'modern novel', by then had all too many unwelcome distractions to endure at home.

Almost continuous rain during that ‘year without a summer’ kept the cottage’s walls saturated because it had no damp course. Then on 15 March, Henry’s bank failure inflicted financial loss on virtually all her immediate family. She herself lost £12.15s., being Egerton’s recently made payment for the second edition of *Sense and Sensibility*, and also £13.7s. for spare copies of *Mansfield Park*, stored in Henry’s bank (Le Faye, 2004, 234). What happened to the £15 half-yearly dividend, received in January for her ‘Navy Fives’, is not clear, but subsequent payments were made to Hoare’s bank in London, where she and her mother had at once opened accounts (Jenkins, 1954, 58-9). Perhaps also in March she suffered the first twinges of her ultimately fatal disease; yet in spite of everything she doggedly maintained an average of 320 words a day on *Persuasion*.

As Jane Austen was highly sensitive to weather conditions, the subsequent six months must have been a trial to her and the rest of the household, in a damp and under-heated house. From April onwards, a succession of frosty, cold and wet days followed. Mrs Austen, unable to be out of doors to pursue her customary vigorous gardening, developed persistent headaches. Early in September, the frost was so sharp that Martha Lloyd for the first time ever developed chilblains on her fingers (Letters, 13 Mar., 21 Apr., 8 Sept.1816). Even so, Jane had completed *Persuasion* in August; the revision to its final chapters probably took place during a few dry and more cheerful days (Ditchfield, 1887, 47-61; Corley, 2001, 115). The weather improved in mid-October, but Murray’s letter of the 21st arrived to give her a severe jolt.

The cheque he sent (National Library of Scotland, Ms. 42001 f 8, recto and verso) was for the unexpectedly meagre sum of £38.18.1d. Although she had made £221.6.4d. from *Emma*, he had deducted £182.8.3d. for losses on the second edition of *Mansfield Park*. She was the only earner in a household cruelly set back by Henry’s bankruptcy, their mother having lost £132, together with £50 a year each that Henry and Frank could no longer pay to her. Edward, needing to meet a debt of £20,000 to the Exchequer, owed as guarantor of the Receiver-General’s financial deficit, as well as the costs of a long drawn-out court case over the ownership of his Hampshire properties, felt he could do no more than supply the cottage with firewood (Hodge, 1972, 196). Meanwhile, the recent poor and rain-soaked harvest had driven up the price of bread by a fifth, while greengrocery produce had also become appreciably dearer.

As if that were not enough, Murray’s cheque turned out to be a four-month bill, not cashable until February. His practice was to delay payments for virtually all his authors, by between three to nine months. As the cheque’s endorsements show, Jane Austen had no option but to discount it. Masterman & Co., a London private bank, was instructed to pay it on behalf of its country agent, Heath & Co. in Andover, about ten miles from Chawton. Sarah Telfer, doubtless the daughter of George, the Andover hairdresser, for some reason also endorsed the cheque. As the Bank of England discount rate was currently at 5 per cent, the loss to Jane Austen must have been higher. In the absence of any letters between September and December, her reactions to those setbacks can only be guessed

at. Writing novels and letters may have been a kind of therapy for combating her disappointments, about both money and the practical difficulties of arranging further publication. She had probably begun to convert the manuscript of *Susan* into *Northanger Abbey*.

The recovery of that manuscript had rekindled her deep-seated anger against Crosby. In an introduction to the revised work, the ‘Advertisement of the Authoress’, she stressed the changes in ‘places, manners, [fashions in] books and opinions’ since *Susan* was originally written in 1803, and then gratuitously dragged in the case of an (unnamed) publisher’s persistent – and to her incomprehensible – refusal to bring out that novel. ‘That any bookseller should ... purchase what he did not think it worth while to publish seems extraordinary’ (Southam, 1933, 12). When Henry later preceded his edition of the posthumous *Northanger Abbey* with the ‘Biographical Notice’, he saw nothing odd in asserting that her friends had with difficulty persuaded his sister to publish her first work, a claim made only a few pages before her assault on a publisher who had omitted to perform that very task.

### **1817: disillusion and despair**

After six or seven months of deteriorating health, early in 1817 Jane Austen felt strong enough to begin work on a new novel, *Sanditon*. According to Brian Southam, that twelve-chapter fragment contains ‘the most vigorous of all Jane Austen’s writing’ (Southam, 1964, 102), averaging as she did about 460 words a day in February and then 415 words to 18 March, when increasing debility brought that work to a stop. Yet she had the energy to pen no fewer than 7,100 words in eleven letters between 23 January and 22 May. She still looked forward to seeing more of her novels in print, trusting that the £450 given up by her refusing Murray’s offer for the three copyrights would be more than offset once these and future novels continued to build up her popularity among the public.

Publication matters regularly occupied her thoughts. On 7 March, a payment from Egerton of £19.13s. for the second edition of *Sense and Sensibility*, according to a letter to her niece Caroline on the 14th ‘gives me this fine flow of Literary Ardour’ (Letter, 14 Mar. 1817). On the 13th she had confidentially answered a question raised by another and favourite niece, Fanny Knight: ‘Miss Catherine [renamed from the previous *Susan*] is put on the Shelve for the present, and I do not know that she will ever come out’. Even so, ‘I have something ready for Publication, which may perhaps appear about a twelvemonth hence. It is short, about the length of Catherine’. The subject of money was also in her mind, from the words she wrote to Fanny: ‘Single Women have a dreadful propensity for being poor’ (Letter, 13 Mar. 1817).

Jane Austen was far less forthcoming to Henry, when on 23 March, five days after abandoning the composition of *Sanditon*, he enquired if she had another work ready for the publisher. She ‘could not say No when he asked, but he knows nothing more about it’: a dismal end to six years of collaboration (Letter, 23 Mar. 1817). As the poorly-off curate at Chawton, he was no longer of practical

assistance to her, but she saw no point in maintaining touch with Murray. Then an unrelated shock all but broke her spirit. On 28 March, her wealthy and childless uncle, James Leigh Perrot, died; she hoped that some at least of the family would find themselves benefiting from his will. Those expectations vanished with the news that his widow, Jane, had inherited the whole of his fortune. As Jane Austen wrote nine days later to her naval brother Charles in notably uneven handwriting, that grievous disappointment had ‘brought on a relapse’ so alarming that Cassandra had to return post-haste from the funeral, instead of staying on to be with her aunt (Letter, 6 Apr. 1817).

On top of the recurrent pains and discomforts of what she called her ‘sad complaint’, she perhaps began to experience an acute sense of failure. Although her total lifetime earnings were estimated at £684. 13s. (Hodge, 1975, 84), less than £39 came from Murray. She died in mid-July, whereupon Henry at once opened talks with Murray about publishing *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*; he was unable to improve the ‘on-commission’ terms which his sister had secured for *Emma*. Both works were considered too short to be issued separately, and so were published in four volumes that December, again anonymously. The set cost 24 shillings.

Intriguingly enough, in the summer of 1818 Byron was writing the first Canto of *Don Juan*. There Donna Inez, separated from her lover Juan, spoke the celebrated lines that ‘Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart./’Tis woman’s whole existence’. A recent editor has suggested that because Anne Elliot’s remarks to Captain Harville, about men’s and women’s differing attitudes to love, were along the same lines, Murray, as publisher of both works, ‘may very well’ have sent a copy of *Persuasion* to Byron (McGann, 1986, 5, 71, 680). However, the poet is not known to have mentioned Jane Austen in any of his writings.

Although 1,400 of the joint novels’ 1,750 copies had been sold by the end of 1818, netting almost £534, neither Henry nor Murray seems to have pushed for a second edition, and all copies left over were cheaply remaindered. Only in 1832 did Richard Bentley, of New Burlington Street, buy the copyrights for £250; Egerton’s executor, Pinkney, received £40 for *Persuasion*, Cassandra’s share thus being £210. In 1833, Bentley published all six novels, for the first time under the author’s name.

## Conclusion

Jan Fergus, a leading authority on Jane Austen’s relations with publishers, judged that as early as the 1790s she must have grasped ‘the possibility of earning money from her novels’; to that end, once capable of making arrangements with firms after 1809, she became ‘increasingly professional’ in her ‘publishing choices’ (Fergus, 2005, 8, 11). After Henry, as her agent, committed the misjudgment of allowing the copyright of *Pride and Prejudice* to be relinquished at too cheap a price, she made sure that he never again negotiated in her absence; she also demanded that publishers should agree to ‘on-commission’ terms, despite their rarity in that era.

Only nowadays is it becoming clear how preoccupied she became with publishing matters, as well as with a reliance on earnings from her books, to provide some independent money. On the same day as Henry and she held their final meeting with Egerton in November 1814, she had informed a niece that 'People are more ready to borrow & praise, than to buy ... but tho' I like praise as well as anybody, I like what Edward calls *Pewter* [money] too' (Letters, 30 Nov. 1814).

Being single-minded in her objectives, she virtually took over negotiations, and established an – all too brief – personal rapport with Murray. By then, she had acquired a sense of business, however limited her commercial experience turned out to be. Although her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh, in his *Memoir* of 1870, portrayed her (in Kathryn Sutherland's words) as a 'meek spirit' to whom 'writing was of no more value than needlework' (Sutherland, 2002, xv), Jane Austen's character becomes more credible as soon as her dealings with publishers are taken into account. One of the great tragedies of English literature is that her family never gave a thought to collecting and treasuring every scrap of paper and candid reminiscence about her personal and literary activities. That would have allowed a full and well-balanced account of her life to be written, to complement and interpret in a worthwhile fashion the six (and one-third) incomparable novels she gave to the world.

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*My special thanks are due to David Gilson, whose Bibliography of Jane Austen is a major source of the data for this article. I am most grateful also to David McClay, Senior Curator of the John Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland, for providing a photocopy of the October 1816 cheque, unpublished information, and advice. Deirdre Le Faye has once again assisted with very helpful comments on an earlier draft.*



# *Jane Austen and the Art of 'Polite Shopping'*

Irene Collins

Thirty years ago social historians became fascinated by a topic to which they gave the unlovely name of 'consumerism'. The craze began in 1982, when Neil McKendrick wrote as the opening words of a seminal volume:

There was a consumer revolution in eighteenth-century England. More men and women than ever before in human history enjoyed the experience of acquiring material possessions. Objects which for centuries had been the privileged possessions of the rich came to be within the reach of a larger part of society than ever before, and, for the first time, to be within the legitimate aspirations of almost all of it.<sup>1</sup>

The immediate reaction to this statement was a flurry of research into the number of goods which had begun pouring out of the factories in the early decades of the eighteenth century as a result of the Industrial Revolution. The focus soon changed, however, from the supply of goods to the ways in which the goods reached the hands of people who wanted to buy them; in other words, to the history of 'shopping'.<sup>2</sup> For any subject concerned with modes of behaviour, literary sources are more valuable than official reports and statistics. In relation to shopping, the letters and novels of Jane Austen deserve serious attention, since they cover an important phase in its history – namely the phenomenon known as 'Polite Shopping'.

In the early decades of the eighteenth century, the members of polite society never entered a shop, even when they wished to purchase an unusual item of a kind which would need to satisfy their particular fancy. They would either send a trusted servant such as the 'man's man' or the ladies maid to London to make the purchase, or send detailed instructions to a known tradesman to deliver the item by carrier. These old-fashioned practices lingered on in country districts, and Jane Austen's novels, in which she faithfully records the transitional nature of society at the time, contain references to them. In *Sense and Sensibility* for instance, Edward Ferrars teases Marianne about the number of magnificent orders she would be sending to booksellers, music sellers and print shops in London in the unlikely event of her acquiring a fortune.<sup>3</sup> Yet the same novel makes it abundantly clear that Polite Shopping was already well established.

In fact it had become a sign of gentility to go shopping every day, along with such practices as paying morning calls and frequenting coffee shops. Men as well as women would go shopping not only for 'manly' purposes such as choosing a gun at a gunsmith's but to buy household requirements such as tea and cheese. It was common practice for both men and women to visit shops simply to look around, without any intention of buying anything unless they saw something

tempting. Young ladies were sometimes chaperoned, though it was permissible for them to enter shops unaccompanied in a respectable area. To cater for this burgeoning trade special shops were set up in many provincial towns and cities, and whole streets were devoted to them in London and Bath where it became a common practice for the wealthy to take rooms for the 'season'. Others would send 'commissions' to their luckier acquaintances, with detailed instructions as to the items to be purchased on their behalf. Jane Austen's letters contain a number of references to commissions she received from relatives and friends when she was visiting or living in Bath; other letters refer to commissions which she herself sent to Cassandra when the latter was staying at Godmersham.<sup>4</sup> Shops and shopping streets became useful places for casual meetings with friends and acquaintances.

Procedure for making purchases followed a number of rigid conventions. No price was mentioned until a shopper showed genuine interest in a particular item; the shopkeeper then stated a price based on his or her assessment of the customer's social standing. A lower price might be suggested to a regular customer, or to someone who might come again, and a high price to someone whose dress and demeanour suggested great wealth but who was otherwise unknown. Bargaining was not uncommon, accompanied by a ritual of gestures and facial expressions. When a purchase was finally made, the item was sent round to the customer's residence or hotel room. No payment took place on the spot. The whole process involved a great deal of repatee between shopkeeper and customer, and could take up a great deal of time.

Polite Shopping was not practised in all shops. According to Jane Austen's letters, it did not take place in the 'cheap shop' near Walcot Church to which her Aunt Leigh-Perrot introduced her in Bath.<sup>5</sup> It was confined by tacit agreement to shops in 'elegant' parts of town. Nor did it pervade the whole of the upper and middle classes, though most of their members would have had enough money to buy luxury goods. It was confined to the 'better' elements, known as 'the sorts', which emerged from a mysterious process of selection known only in England. At Highbury, for instance, 'the sorts' would have included not only Mr Knightley, who had large estates at Donwell, but Mr Weston and Mr Woodhouse, who owned no more than a house and garden, and Mr and Mrs Cole, who had merely purchased a house on the outskirts of the town. Mr Cole actually engaged in trade in London, as did Mr Weston. One cannot imagine either Mr Knightley or Mr Woodhouse engaging in Polite Shopping, though Messrs Weston and Cole might have done so. Mr Weston's son Frank would have been quite capable of bargaining when he went to London to buy a piano at the newly established Broadwoods.

Jane Austen was fully acquainted with the topic. She was familiar not only with nearby provincial towns but with the main shopping areas in both London and Bath, having paid lengthy visits to each. She actually lived in Bath for five years after her father's retirement in 1801. In her letters we learn, for instance, that shops in a near-by large town were not wholly without their attractions for polite shoppers. In June 1814, Jane wrote to Cassandra, 'The Clements are Gone to Petersfield, to look'.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile her novels were illustrating the more prestigious

locations. Chapters 2 to 19 of *Northanger Abbey* are set in Bath, where the young Catherine Morland is attending her first season under the guidance of the generous but unintelligent Mrs Allen. After devoting three or four whole days to purchasing a fashionable gown for Mrs Allen and a suitable outfit for Catherine, the latter finds that visiting the shops and walking in the Pump Room are the two main duties of each morning. In fashionable Milsom Street her impoverished friend Isabella Thorpe has to be content with window-gazing. At a ball in the Lower Rooms Catherine is introduced to Henry Tilney, who amuses himself at the expense of the ingenuous Mrs Allen by boasting of his prowess at shopping by himself – buying his own cravats and choosing gowns for his sister: ‘I bought one for her the other day, and it was pronounced to be a prodigious bargain by every lady who saw it.’ Whether true of himself or not, Henry was likely to know that such activities were a common practice in Bath, where he spent the season every year in the company of his father. Jane Austen was aware that men would sometimes go out shopping alone in Bath when they would never have dreamed of doing so at home. At about the time she was writing the first version of *Northanger Abbey* she reported to Cassandra that their brother Edward, who had taken rooms in Bath in the hope that the hot springs would cure a suspected attack of gout, had gone out to taste a cheese.<sup>7</sup>

Jane Austen, in her letters to Cassandra from Steventon, had so often complained of the problems involved in buying material for gowns and cloaks and either making it up herself or taking it to a dressmaker, that on 26 December 1798 she declared ‘I wish such things were to be bought ready made’. A mere two months later she apparently had an offer from Cassandra, who was still at Godmersham, to buy her a gown in London. Jane Austen wrote, ‘Your imagination has pictured to you exactly such a one as is necessary to make me happy’. On 27 October the following year she replied, ‘I like the Gown very much, and my Mother thinks it very ugly’. More favourable comments were reported in subsequent letters. Jane Austen’s letters, however, are notoriously difficult to interpret. It is more than likely that Cassandra bought the material and made the gown herself on the lines of one she had seen in a shop, and both she and Jane may have understood this all along.<sup>8</sup> In spite of wishing that gowns could be bought ready made, Jane when living in Bath bought material and either made a gown herself or took it to a dressmaker, thereby incurring the very difficulties she had previously complained of. On one occasion she was obliged to buy more material than she needed in order to be sure of having enough to make a flounce; on another the dressmaker failed to copy her instructions and Jane had to make a great many alterations herself. Perhaps the gowns displayed in fashionable shops were too expensive both for Jane in Bath and for Cassandra in London.<sup>9</sup>

Although *Northanger Abbey* is often regarded as the ‘Bath novel’ *par excellence*, a further aspect of Polite Shopping can be found in *Persuasion*, parts of which are also set in Bath. The fashionable area of Bath was well known for chance encounters, and when Admiral Croft offers Anne Elliot his arm as far as Camden Place they meet so many of his former naval acquaintances in Milson

Street that she has to wait until they reach the greater quiet of Belmont before hearing the surprising piece of news he had promised her.<sup>10</sup> Yet more aspects of Polite Shopping are illustrated in *Sense and Sensibility*, in the chapters where the Dashwood sisters are staying with Mrs Jennings in her London home. They are invited to go on a shopping expedition with Mrs Jennings's daughter, the excitable Charlotte Palmer, 'whose eye was caught by every thing pretty, expensive, or new; who was wild to buy all, could decide on none, and dawdled away her time in rapture and indecision.' In chapter 30, Colonel Brandon hears of Willoughby's forthcoming marriage with Miss Grey from two ladies gossiping loudly in a stationer's shop in Pall Mall where he 'had business'. Mrs Palmer, who hears the news from another source, can 'soon tell at which warehouse Miss Grey's clothes were to be seen'.<sup>11</sup> In chapter 33 we have the priceless account of the affected manner in which Robert Ferrars sought to demonstrate the delicacy of his taste when ordering a toothpick-case for himself at a jeweller's shop in Sackville Street. Not until 'its shape and ornaments were determined, all of which, after examining and debating for a quarter of an hour every toothpick-case in the shop were finally arranged by his own inventive fancy', and not until he had 'named the last day on which his existence could be continued without the possession of the toothpick case' was he ready to draw on his gloves in a leisurely fashion and leave the shop; meanwhile other customers were having to wait their turn. This of course is a caricature of Polite Shopping, even at its most elaborate; but along with the earlier account of Mrs Palmer dawdling her own (and other people's) time away it suffices to show why, as more and more goods in more and more variety came pouring out of the factories, shopkeepers and tradesmen seized the opportunity to abandon Polite Shopping and change to fixed prices with payment by cash on demand.<sup>12</sup>

This finale, however, came after Jane Austen's death. Meanwhile she had noticed two social problems inherent in Polite Shopping, both of which are with us in one form or another to the present day. In *Emma* we have an account of a village shop, Ford's, which was trying to combine its traditional stock of daily necessities with an attempt to cater for a few occasional requirements. Harriet Smith buys muslins and ribbons there; Frank Churchill buys a pair of kid gloves. The shop thereby becomes a valuable community centre, in which people from all walks of life encounter each other. Yet the growing habit of assuming that the very best goods could only be obtained in London or some other prestigious venue was already threatening the survival of such shops. Mr Elton seems to think that taking Emma's painting to London to be framed will in itself appear to make the painting more valuable. Frank Churchill has his own reason for wishing to buy something at Ford's; the fact that the local inn keeps a couple of pairs of horses 'more for the convenience of the neighbourhood than from any run on the roads' shows that few outsiders ever visit, Highbury.<sup>13</sup> With improvements in transport most people were soon able to reach their nearest large town, and there can be few 'Ford's' still in existence.

In chapter 22 of *Northanger Abbey*, General Tilney's comments on his

breakfast-set constitute the classic example of compulsive purchasing – the buying of items simply because they are available. The habit of going to shops regularly, simply to look around, was the origin of this disease. Mrs Bramston, the Austens' neighbour at Steventon, who bought all the latest novels although she lacked the intelligence to read them, and showed off her transparencies to visitors whilst transparencies were fashionable, is probably the only compulsive purchaser Jane knew personally; but she would have had no difficulty in basing an account of General Tilney and his breakfast-set on the vivid denunciations of such addicts in the sermons she heard and read.<sup>14</sup> Since Jane Austen's time more and more items which would have been considered luxuries have become necessities, and political parties on all sides see the purchasing of whatever goods are produced in our factories as vital to the nation's economy and welfare.

### Notes

- 1 Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H.Plumb, *Birth of a Consumer Society: the Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1982), p. 1.
- 2 Helen Berry, 'Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth Century England' (*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*), pp. 375-394.
- 3 *Sense and Sensibility*, ch. 17.
- 4 Deirdre Le Faye (ed.), *Jane Austen's Letters* (O.U.P., 1995), Nos 20, 2133.
- 5 *Ibid.*, Nos. 20, 21.
- 6, *Ibid.*, No. 102.
- 7 *Ibid.*, No. 19.
- 8 *Ibid.*, Nos 15, 18, 23, 27, 33.
- 9 *Ibid.*, Nos 35, 36, 38, 51.
- 10 *Persuasion*, ch. 18.
- 11 *Sense and Sensibility*, ch. 33.
- 12 Helen Berry, *op cit.*, pp.39-40. See also Matthew Hilton, 'The Death of a Consumer Society' (*Trans of the RHS* 18, 2008), pp. 211-36.
- 13 Tara Ghoshal Wallace, 'It must be done in London: The Suburbanization of Highbury' (*Persuasions*, No.29, 2008), p. 73.
- 14 *Letters*, *op.cit.* Nos 23, 27; Irene Collins, *Jane Austen: The Parson's Daughter* (Hambledon Press, 1998), pp. 53, 60.

## *Novels in letters, letters in novels*

Jill Webster

Jane Austen was born in an age when the epistolary novel was still the most popular form of romantic fiction. Third-person fictional narratives had in fact been written by robust male novelists such as Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett, and by more serious female novelists such as Elizabeth Inchbald, Mrs Radcliffe and Jane's much-loved Fanny Burney (after the epistolary *Evelina*); but the writers of romances preferred to use the letter-form, which was supposed to lend the often very unlikely tale an air of immediacy and authenticity. Jane Austen satirised sentimental letter fiction in a precocious piece of juvenilia, 'Love and Freindship' (1790). Her first full-length novel, *Lady Susan*, 1793-4, was written in the form of letters, and it is known that the first draft of what was to become *Sense and Sensibility* was also written as an epistolary novel, entitled 'Elinor and Marianne'. Although she then abandoned the epistolary form for the third-person narratives that better suited her naturalistic and ironic style, letters continued to play an important part in her novels, subtly describing character, lending immediacy and directly driving the plot.

The epistolary novel in the eighteenth century was not one form but many. It could take the form of a collection of stories, familiar letters, a tale interspersed with letters or a narrative entirely composed of letters. Robert Day in *Told in Letters* states that no fewer than one million volumes containing epistolary fiction were published between 1660 and 1740.<sup>1</sup> There were two particular characteristics of a story in letters: authenticity and the depiction of passion, sentiment or feeling. Real-life love-letters such as those of Anne Boleyn and Heloise and Abelard had set a stylistic pattern of passionate artlessness and heartfelt feelings, rather than rounded Augustan cadences, which these novels followed; but flaccid writing, silly plots and unlikely settings hardly made for genuine realism. Most were romances translated from French and some were downright lascivious (perhaps lending some weight to Mr Collins's horror at the suggestion that he might read a novel from a circulating library aloud to the Bennet ladies). It took writers such as Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood and Elizabeth Manley to develop the letter-form novel into longer tales with improved characterisation and more believable plots and settings. Day notes that Behn, Haywood and Manley all wrote plays before they turned their pens to fiction, the source perhaps of their more lively dialogue laced with witty, scandalous anecdotes.

The other development of the letter form was in what were called Familiar Letters. Improvements in the postal system led to a marked increase in letter-writing, and volumes of model letters aimed at young women began to appear, containing fictional and entertaining material as well as instructions on how to behave. It was this form of letters which Samuel Richardson subverted in his first and wildly successful epistolary novel, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). He

saw how a series of short fictional letters planned ‘to instruct handsome Girls, who were obliged to go into Service ... how to avoid the Snares that might be laid against their Virtue’ might be developed into the titillating story of how a serving girl protects her virtue so effectively that she eventually marries her would-be seducer. ‘And hence sprung *Pamela*.’<sup>2</sup>

In *Pamela*, *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison* (Jane Austen’s favourite novel, passages of which she knew by heart and which she adapted as a play), Richardson developed the epistolary form into novels of deep psychological insight. Each novel was a series of letters that chronicled the excitement of a love affair from day to day and, long before Freud, the development of consciousness. Richardson’s exploration of the minutiae of every feeling and situation, however, created problems that earlier novelists had not encountered: whereas previous romantic correspondents had written at believable length, *Pamela* and *Clarissa* are compelled to write letters so long and frequent as to allow time for little else, making the reader wonder how they can be supplied with such a huge quantity of paper, pens and ink (especially in the case of *Clarissa*, who is kept a prisoner for most of the book). Richardson defended the inordinate length of his characters’ letters because of the importance of recording minutiae: ‘Ye World is not enough used to this way of writing, to the moment. It knows not that in the minutiae lie often the unfoldings of the Story as well as the heart.’<sup>3</sup> One of Richardson’s greatest strengths is how the letter writers reveal truths about themselves of which they are unaware, a lesson well learnt by Jane Austen.

In two short letter novels written in her teens and published in her Juvenilia, ‘The Three Sisters’ and ‘Love and Freindship’, the young Jane Austen showed that she was well aware of both the strengths and weaknesses of the letter form. ‘Love and Freindship’ is a burlesque which ridicules the style and the sentimentality of the typical epistolary romantic novel. Here is Jane’s version of Richardson’s writing to the moment:

‘My father started – ‘What noise is that?’ said he. ‘It sounds like a loud rapping at the door,’ replied my mother. ‘It does indeed,’ cried I. ‘I am of your opinion’, said my father, ‘it certainly does appear to proceed from some uncommon violence exerted against our unoffending door.’ ‘Yes’, exclaimed I, ‘I cannot help thinking it must be somebody who knocks for admittance.’<sup>4</sup>

And so on. The subtitle is ‘Deceived in Freindship and Betrayed by Love’, and it tells the sad and ludicrous story of Laura and Sophia, two victims of excessive sensibility much given to fainting (‘We fainted alternately on a sofa’). Alas, Sophia catches a cold ‘caught by her continued faintings in the open air as the dew was falling’ and dies, her last words to her companion being ‘Run mad as often as you choose; but do not faint.’<sup>5</sup>

If ‘Love and Freindship’ shows the inadequacies of the epistolary novel, ‘The Three Sisters’ shows its strengths. Although ‘The Three Sisters’ appears in Volume

the First of the *Juvenilia*, it is followed by two entries dated June 1793, and therefore seems likely to have been composed well after 'Love and Freindship' (1790). In a few pages Jane Austen demonstrates a considerably more assured handling of the epistolary form, and follows Richardson's *Clarissa* in having letters written by different correspondents. Two distinctive voices, those of stupid and selfish Mary and of sensible and witty Georgiana, tell the story from different viewpoints of how Mary is coerced into marrying a thoroughly unlikeable but wealthy man. 'He is quite an old man, about two and thirty, very plain, so plain that I cannot bear to look at him,' writes Mary of her suitor. 'He is extremely disagreeable and I hate him more than any body else in the world. He has a large fortune and will make great settlements on me; but then he is very healthy.'<sup>6</sup> Mary and Georgiana, and the plot about the need for portionless girls to marry wealthy young men, all look forward to the later and greater novels.

In *Lady Susan* Jane Austen completed her only full novel in letter form. It was transcribed in 1805, but Brian Southam suggests that it was written at least ten years earlier, probably between 1793 and 1794.<sup>7</sup> The fact that it was not published in her lifetime would indicate that she thought it unworthy of publication, but good enough to make a fair copy of it. It must have become clear to her that the epistolary form was too limited for her to persist with it, and the first sentence in the Conclusion bears this out: 'This correspondence, by a meeting between some of the parties and a separation between the others, could not, to the great detriment of the Post Office revenue, be continued longer.'<sup>8</sup> There are several correspondents in the novel, and a full picture of Lady Susan is cleverly built up from their different comments. The strongest voice is that of Lady Susan herself, displaying her malice and cruelty but also managing to convince the reader of her wit, beauty and fascination, especially in the eyes of the male sex. 'It is throwing time away to be mistress of French, Italian, German, music, singing, drawing etc., [which] will gain a woman some applause, but will not add one lover to her list', she writes to her companion in crime, Mrs Johnson, in a voice which could be that of Mary Crawford.<sup>9</sup> The wicked Lady Susan takes over the book, rather to the detriment of the other characters. The melodramatic plot is not one suited to Jane Austen's naturalistic style and ironic voice, but it is a pity that she did not revisit in any of her later novels the character of a handsome and sexually predatory widow on the make.

The first draft of what was to become *Sense and Sensibility* was probably written soon after Austen had finished *Lady Susan*, and was also written in letter form. We can only guess at how the novel could have worked in letters, but presumably the correspondences that affect the two pairs of lovers would have been much extended. Correspondence between Elinor and Marianne also would have been difficult in that they are seldom apart. Letters are crucial to the plot of *Sense and Sensibility*, those of Marianne and Willoughby and those of Edward and Lucy Steele. It is difficult for today's readers to understand how Marianne is offending against the norms of polite society by engaging in a secret correspondence with a young man to whom she is not formally engaged. Elinor, as always, correctly judges her behaviour:



That such letters, so full of affection and confidence, could have been so answered, Elinor, for Willoughby's sake, would have been unwilling to believe. But her condemnation of him did not blind her to the impropriety of their having been written at all; and she was silently grieving over the imprudence which had hazarded such unsolicited proofs of tenderness.<sup>10</sup>

The letters, which might have been a part of a longer correspondence in the first draft, well display Marianne's impulsive passionate nature and also her naïveté, just as Willoughby's single letter reveals his selfishness and his chilly disregard for Marianne's feelings: 'It is with great regret that I obey your commands of returning the letters with which I have been honoured from you, and the lock of hair which you so obligingly bestowed on me.'<sup>11</sup>

The correspondence between Lucy Steele and the unwilling Edward is more often referred to than quoted. Lucy uses her reports of letters from Edward to taunt Elinor. 'Writing to each other ... is the only comfort we have in such long separations', she says pointedly and untruthfully.<sup>12</sup> We have only two examples of Lucy's own letters, which perfectly illuminate her shrewish disposition and her unwitting revelation of her real motives. In the first, assuring Elinor of Edward's affection for her and her own wish to release him from his engagement, it is clear that the opposite is true: 'I spent two happy hours with him yesterday afternoon, he would not hear of our parting, though earnestly did I, as I thought my duty required, urge him to it for prudence sake, and would have parted for ever on the spot, would he consent to it; but he said it would never be.'<sup>13</sup> In the second, written to Edward blithely informing him of her marriage to his brother, Lucy disingenuously says that she has married Robert because Edward no longer loves her ('I scorn to accept a hand while the heart is another's') and that she bears Edward no ill will and is his 'sincere well-wisher, friend and sister'.<sup>14</sup> Lucy's extended correspondence would have been well worth reading.

It is in *Pride and Prejudice* that letters form an important and integral part of the novel, describing the characters and advancing the plot; there are far more in this novel than in any other of Jane Austen's. Mr Collins's wonderfully comic one, intended as an olive-branch, shows his character better than any description could do: toadying, conceited, pompous, verbose and ridiculous in his presumptions. Elizabeth and Mr Bennet see this clearly:

'Can he be a sensible man, sir?'

'No, my dear, I think not. I have great hopes of finding him quite the reverse. There is a mixture of servility and self-importance in his letter, which promises well. I am impatient to see him.'<sup>15</sup>

And of course Mr Collins fully lives up to their expectations.

The most important letter in *Pride and Prejudice* is the long one from Darcy written after Elizabeth has refused his proposal of marriage; occurring in Chapter 35, more than halfway through the book, it is the turning point for the plot. It

shows Elizabeth how wrong she has been in her belief in the truth of Wickham's assertions about Darcy and how prejudiced she has been in her judgement of his character, and in altering her perceptions, it begins the process of turning her heart and her fancy towards him. The letter is the first time we hear Darcy's true voice, honest, truthful and clear-sighted, even if he is also proud and convinced of the rightness of his own opinions. His style is weighty, somewhat ponderous, but like Elizabeth we can forgive him for his strength of feeling: 'Be not alarmed, Madam, on receiving this letter, by the apprehension of its containing any repetition of those sentiments, or renewal of those offers, which were last night so disgusting to you.'<sup>16</sup> Darcy's writing must have been extremely small, for his very long letter covers only two sheets of paper and the envelope. In Chapter 58, after Elizabeth has happily accepted Darcy's renewed proposal, they discuss the letter, which Darcy describes as having been written in 'a dreadful bitterness of spirit'. Elizabeth replies that 'The letter, perhaps, began in bitterness, but it did not end so. The adieu is charity itself.'<sup>17</sup>

Darcy's letter-writing has already been discussed earlier in the novel, during Jane and Elizabeth's stay at Netherfield. Bingley says 'He does not write with ease. He studies too much for words of four syllables' and excuses his own messy efforts by saying that his own ideas 'flow so rapidly that I have not time to express them', for which Elizabeth accuses him of boastfulness. Miss Bingley's fulsome praises for Darcy's letter to his sister take the form of a brilliant piece of comic dialogue:

'You write uncommonly fast.'

'You are mistaken, I write rather slowly.'

'How many letters you must have occasion to write in the course of the year! Letters of business too! How odious I should think them!'

'It is fortunate, then, that they fall to my lot rather than to yours.' ...

'But do you always write such charming long letters to her, Mr Darcy?'

'They are generally long; but whether always charming, it is not for me to determine.'<sup>18</sup>

An important correspondent in *Pride and Prejudice* is Jane. Her letter from the Gardiners' house in London informing Elizabeth of Caroline Bingley's visit and her chilly rudeness tells us that Bingley has been persuaded to give up all thoughts of her and not to return to Netherfield; it also confirms what we know about Jane's character, her soft forgiving nature and her unwillingness to think ill of anyone. Two letters from Jane, received by Elizabeth in the inn in Derbyshire, tell her and us about Lydia's elopement and her disgrace. Jane Austen shows that she has learnt from Richardson how well a letter can be used to describe a complicated scene, the observed reactions of all the participants and the feelings of the writer and the reader. Lydia's own letter to Jane perfectly displays her thoughtlessness and her blithe unconcern that she has done anything wrong: 'What a good joke it will be! I can hardly write for laughing.'<sup>19</sup> Her later begging letter to Elizabeth does however show a certain realisation that her actions have consequences: 'I do not think we

shall have quite money enough to live on without some help ... but, however, do not speak to Mr Darcy about it, if you had rather not.'<sup>20</sup> The honest and upright Mr and Mrs Gardiner are also useful correspondents. Mr Gardiner describes Lydia's and Wickham's fecklessness and Darcy's generosity, and Mrs Gardiner, more subtly, hints at Darcy's true motives in helping the unlovely couple: 'If he had another motive, I am sure it would never disgrace him ... I thought him very sly; – he hardly ever mentioned your name. But slyness seems the fashion.'<sup>21</sup>

In the later novels letters occur infrequently, as Jane Austen prefers to employ a more direct way of describing character and incident. But when letters are used, as in Chapters 43 to 46 in *Mansfield Park*, their effect is electric. These letters, written to Fanny by Mary Crawford, Edmund and Lady Bertram, represent Jane Austen's most sophisticated and successful use of the letter form in her novels to further both plot and character. It is of course the only time that Fanny is away from Mansfield Park, in the squalid confines of her father's house in Portsmouth. The letters tell Fanny of Henry and Maria's elopement and of the end of the affair between Edmund and Mary, and they also tell us and her all we want to know about the writers and their feelings, as we read them as through Fanny's eyes. The first letter, from Mary, begins by archly congratulating Fanny on her conquest of Henry and goes on to refer to Edmund in a semi-casual but pointed way: 'Of the last-mentioned hero, what shall I say? If I avoided his name entirely, it would look suspicious', she writes, but then adds an aside which seems to come more from the heart: 'he gets into my head more than does me good', illustrating her own ambivalent feelings. The letter confirms for Fanny the certainty that she intends to marry him.<sup>22</sup> The next letter is from Edmund. It is as fine an example of Richardson's writing to the moment as Jane Austen ever wrote, as Edmund lengthily examines his heart and his feelings and lays them before his unwilling correspondent: 'You have my thoughts exactly as they arise, my dear Fanny; perhaps they are sometimes contradictory, but it will not be a less faithful picture of my mind.'<sup>23</sup> He is unsure of Mary's feelings, grieves that she is being led astray by her worldly friends, likes to think that her attachment to Fanny shows her better and truer nature, is worried that he is not rich enough for her and again and again turns the knife in poor Fanny's heart by declaring his love for her: 'I cannot give her up, Fanny. She is the only woman in the world whom I could ever think of as a wife ... I cannot give her up ... Were I refused, I must bear it; and till I am, I can never cease to try for her.' Jane Austen then gives us Fanny's uncharacteristically sharp reactions to Edmund's shilly-shallying and his misconceptions of Mary: 'She looked over the letter again. "So very fond of me!" 'tis nonsense all. She loves nobody but herself and her brother. "Her friends leading her astray for years!" She is quite as likely to have led them astray ... Edmund, you do not know me ... Finish it at once. Let there be an end of this suspense. Fix, commit, condemn yourself.'<sup>24</sup>

The next letter comes, surprisingly, from Lady Bertram, informing Fanny that Tom has been taken ill in London and that Edmund will soon be escorting him back to Mansfield. Further letters to Fanny from her ladyship are reported, described as 'a sort of playing at being frightened', until Tom finally arrives at Mansfield and

his mother sees how ill he is. 'Then she wrote as she might have spoken. "He is just come, my dear Fanny, and is taken upstairs; and I am so shocked to see him, that I do not know what to do."'”<sup>25</sup> Tom's illness means that Fanny's stay in Portsmouth is extended, and it is several weeks before she receives another letter from Mary Crawford. This letter shows Mary, always a divided character, at her worst. She disgusts Fanny with her crude hints about Edmund becoming the heir to Mansfield. 'To have such a fine young man cut off in the flower of his days, is most melancholy ... I really am quite agitated on the subject. Fanny, Fanny, I see you smile and look cunning, but upon my honour I never bribed a physician in my life.'<sup>26</sup>

Mary's next letter is very different: 'A most scandalous, ill-natured rumour has just reached me ... Depend upon it, there is some mistake, and ... Henry is blameless ... Say not a word of it; hear nothing, surmise nothing, whisper nothing till I write again. I am sure it will be hushed up, and nothing proved but Rushworth's folly.'<sup>27</sup> This is indeed writing to the moment, and both the truth and Mary's anxiety are clearly apparent. The last letter in the series is from Edmund, confirming the elopement and telling Fanny that she and Susan should be ready to return to Mansfield the following day. Edmund writes in short sharp sentences, very different from the long discursive ones of his previous letter; it ends: 'You may imagine some thing of my present state. There is no end of the evil let loose upon us.'<sup>28</sup> This is the end of the correspondence, and the rest of the story is told in the usual way. But these illuminating letters show Jane Austen's complete mastery of the letter form in revealing motivation and character, and in moving the plot forward while at the same time showing the reactions of those affected.

Letters in *Emma* are conspicuous by their absence, except for Frank Churchill's long self-explanatory one to Mrs Weston, the reading of which is used by Jane Austen to compare Frank's frippery nature with Mr Knightley's solid worth. But letters have a place in the novel. Robert Martin's proposal to Harriet in a letter which even the prejudiced Emma has to acknowledge expresses 'good sense, warm attachment, liberality, propriety, even delicacy of feeling' serves to show up her misjudgement of both him and Harriet.<sup>29</sup> And Jane Fairfax's anxiety to get to the post to collect Frank's letters in person is symptomatic of her secret, hidden love. It also reminds us of the illicit nature of a secret correspondence, as in Marianne's to Willoughby.

A far more telling letter is the last one to appear in any novel, the letter written by Captain Wentworth at the end of *Persuasion* declaring his love for Anne. We all know that the chapter containing this letter and the preceding one - Chapters 22 and 23 - were rewritten by Jane Austen. The cancelled chapter contains no letter, just 'a silent but very powerful dialogue; on his side supplication, on hers acceptance.'<sup>30</sup> The letter in the revised Chapter 23 is far more dramatic; it is urgent, passionate, from the heart. Compared with Darcy's long and carefully worded letter in *Pride and Prejudice*, it is rough and immediate, but every sentence seems wrung out of the depth of Wentworth's frustrated feelings of love as they drive his pen:

I can listen no longer in silence. I must speak to you by such means as are within my reach. You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone for ever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own, than when you almost broke it eight years and a half ago ... You alone have brought me to Bath. For you alone I think and plan. Have you not seen this? Can you fail to have understood my wishes? ... I can hardly write ... I must go, uncertain of my fate; but I shall return hither [and] a word, a look will be enough to decide whether I enter your father's house this evening or never.'<sup>31</sup>

The immediacy of his passion is raw, and the energy of his style bespeaks the man of action, just as his determination to know the truth tells us of his worthiness of Anne's hand and heart. This could never have been written by the prim and prurient Samuel Richardson. Unwell as she was when she came to the end of writing *Persuasion*, Jane Austen shows in Wentworth's letter that she has not only mastered Richardson's writing to the moment but can far exceed it. She knew that at a time of crisis a man does not speak or write in lengthy convoluted sentences, but in short, intense spurts that are dragged out of him. Wentworth's letter recalls Darcy's unwilling proposal to Elizabeth, equally short: 'In vain have I struggled. It will not do. You must allow me to tell you how much I admire and love you.'<sup>32</sup> Her heroes seldom utter words of passionate love, but when they do, they are absolutely right. We might all like to receive such a love-letter as Wentworth's.

Jane Austen's use of letters in her novels makes an interesting progression, from the early flawed letter-novels to the careful placing of significant letters in her mature works, letters that add so much to our appreciation of her fine characterisation and insight as well as to our admiration for her careful plotting. What is perhaps surprising is that her own private correspondence is so different, being largely confined to domestic details and family news. But who knows what Cassandra consigned to that bonfire?

## Notes

- 1 Robert Adams Day, *Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction Before Richardson* (University of Michigan Press, 1966).
- 2 Samuel Richardson to Johannes Stinstra, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed John Carroll (Oxford University Press, 1964).
- 3 Samuel Richardson to Lady Bradshaigh, *Selected Letters*.
- 4 'Love and Freindship', Letter 5th.
- 5 Ibid., Letter 14th.
- 6 'The Three Sisters', Miss Stanhope to Mrs – .
- 7 B.C. Southam, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts*, ch. 3.
- 8 *Lady Susan*, Conclusion.
- 9 Ibid., Letter 7.
- 10 *S&S*, ch. 29.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid., ch. 22

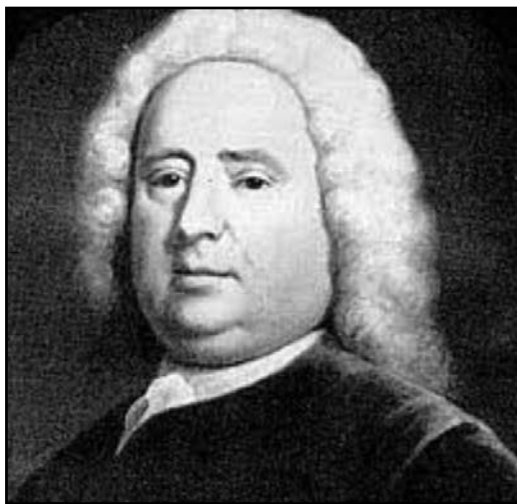
- 13 Ibid., ch. 38.
- 14 Ibid., ch. 49.
- 15 P&P, ch. 13.
- 16 Ibid., ch. 38.
- 17 Ibid., ch. 58.
- 18 Ibid., ch. 10.
- 19 Ibid., ch. 47.
- 20 Ibid., ch. 61.
- 21 Ibid., ch. 52.
- 22 MP, ch. 43.
- 23 Ibid., ch. 44.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid., ch. 45.
- 27 Ibid., ch. 46.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Emma, ch. 7.
- 32 Persuasion, cancelled Chapter 23.

*This article first appeared in the 2011 edition of Austentations, an annual publication by the Kent Branch of the Jane Austen Society.*

## *Sir Charles Grandison* – ‘An amazing horrid book’

Clare Fisher

I have long been intrigued by the context in which Jane Austen wrote and, in particular, by what she read. For this reason, I was delighted to find a copy of Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* recently. What follows is some reflections on reading this book that is acknowledged to have been her favourite and upon which she based a short five-act play (described by Brian Southam as both a 'skit' and a 'tribute') for performance by members of her family. Claire Tomalin credits *Sir Charles Grandison* with 800,000 words and although I have not counted them myself, I can confirm that the book is a substantial read. In my very closely printed copy (undated, possibly late 19th- or early 20th-century) I found I was the first reader, since I had to cut many of the pages open. This caused a little problem as I was planning to do some of my reading on an aeroplane where even a paper knife is regarded as a potential weapon! Whoever has had this book sitting on their bookshelf for the last one hundred years or so has missed a treat.



*Samuel Richardson*

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) received 'only common school-learning' and was apprenticed to a printer. He married at the age of 32 and over the next ten years experienced the deaths of all of his six children and finally that of his wife also. He married again and four daughters of this marriage did survive. He had a long and distinguished career in printing (eventually becoming Master of the Stationers' Company in 1754) and his own writing culminated in three epistolary novels – *Pamela* (1740), *Clarissa* (1747-48) and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-4). He was much admired in his own lifetime – Johnson's Dictionary contained more

citations from *Clarissa* than from any other work. He continued to revise his novels and to work as a publisher until the end of his life.

*Sir Charles Grandison* sets out to be a portrayal of a 'Good Man'. Its heroine is Harriet Byron, who is principled, religious and widely regarded as exceptionally beautiful. Harriet has constant difficulty in fending off her admirers. In the novel's most action-packed part, she is abducted by Sir Hargrave Pollexfen (surely a name made up to sound like no real person). Sir Hargrave claims that he is not doing anything wrong as he is eligibly wealthy and intends to marry her. Harriet manages to evade his first attempt to force her into marriage and as she is being driven away in a carriage, muffled and restrained, Sir Charles Grandison happens to be passing, hears her cries and rescues her. Harriet instantly loves him because of his chivalry, personal beauty and kindness.

The character of Sir Charles is quickly developed in an extended explanation of why he refuses a duel with Sir Hargrave. In answer to Sir Hargrave's challenge, he writes:

Have you any friends, Sir Hargrave? Do they love you? Do you love them? Are you desirous of life for their sakes? For your own? Have you enemies to whom your untimely end would give pleasure? Let these considerations weigh with you: they do, and always did, with me. I am cool: you cannot be so. The cool person, on such an occasion as this, should put the warm one on thinking: this, however, as you please.

Sir Charles (and to a lesser extent, Harriet) spends a lot of the book sorting out complex situations; for example, he applies his upright principles in resolving what to do about his late father's mistress and his illegitimate half brothers. Other delicate situations he addresses include how to treat the mother of his ward who drinks heavily and has a 'new husband' rather too often. He is a very active man with what Harriet describes as a 'restless goodness' and he uses his good sense and understanding of others to hold steady to his principles and excite admiration and respect from all. He has an especial flair for befriending and improving those who start out trying to attack him. I didn't keep an exact tally but I think he refuses a further four duels in the course of the book.

The greatest difficulty Sir Charles has to resolve is from his own past. We learn that he regards himself as 'bound' to the aristocratic and beautiful Italian Clementina della Porretta. They met on his journeys around Europe as a young man but did not marry because of the difference in religion. Sir Charles learns that Clementina has been very ill and is summoned to Italy by her family. I was completely caught up in the implausible tale of mental breakdown in the face of unrequited love and strong religious principles. It looked for a while as if his marriage to Clementina is certain (and what will happen to poor Harriet then?) but Sir Charles manages to return to England, single and with honour very much intact. He has even been instructed by the noble Clementina to marry an Englishwoman, thus freeing him to propose to Harriet as soon as he gets back.



THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
Sir CHARLES GRANDISON.  
IN A  
SERIES *of* LETTERS

Published from the ORIGINALS,  
By the Editor of PAMELA and CLARISSA,

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IN SIX VOLUMES.

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To the Last of which is added,  
An Historical and Characteristical INDEX.

AS ALSO,

A Brief HISTORY, authenticated by Original Letters, of  
the Treatment which the EDITOR has met with from  
certain Booksellers and Printers in Dublin.

Including OBSERVATIONS on Mr. Faulkner's Defence of Him-  
self, published in his Irish News-paper of Nov. 3. 1753.

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VOL. I.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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LONDON:

Printed for S. Richardson;

And Sold by C. HITCH and L. HAWES, in *Pater-noster Row*;

By J. and J. RIVINGTON, in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*;

By ANDREW MILLAR, in the *Strand*;

By R. and J. DODSLEY, in *Pall-Mall*;

By J. LEAKE, at *Bath*; And

By R. MAIN, in *Dublin*.

M.DCC.LIV.

Sir Charles and Harriet duly marry, leaving the last fifth of the novel for general rapture on their happiness and for the visit of the entire Italian family so that we are even able to see Clementina happy. In fact, with the exception of Sir Hargrave, who has reformed but dies a broken man, everyone ends up happy. The book comes to a close about a year after the wedding when Harriet is expecting their child and the future looks completely rosy – there is no doubt of the ‘inviolable affection of the best of men to his grateful Harriet’. It seems a stark contrast to the reality of early married life as actually experienced by Richardson himself.

Although the book is entirely written in letters, Richardson does not seem to have felt at all restricted by this – most of the letters are implausibly long; many contain pages of verbatim dialogue and he allows such devices as a short-hand writer being invited to witness a discussion and providing an exact account of a conversation. My favourite contrivance is when Sir Charles’s old friend Dr Bartlett happens to have a written account of Sir Charles’s travels abroad between the ages of 17 and 25 and which he allows Harriet to enclose in a letter to her friend Lucy. The letter form does allow for a natural description of the intimate details of everyday life, which is generally absorbing and charming; it is good to know exactly which Handel aria Harriet sang after dinner.

Different voices appear in the letters. The most vibrant is that of Sir Charles’s sister Charlotte, who is bright and witty and whose letters are often genuinely funny. Despite the excellent and abundant guidance she has from Harriet and Sir Charles, she approaches matrimony with considerable trepidation:

The matrimonial noose has hung over my head for some time past; and now it is actually fitted to my devoted neck. –Almost choked, my dear!

Before her marriage, Charlotte has grave doubts about the advisability of promising to obey anyone, and once married, she continually falls out with her husband, infuriating him until he smashes up her harpsichord (for which she is blamed). Their reconciliation culminates in a colourful and funny scene in which Charlotte is surprised by her husband while breast-feeding their infant daughter:

The nurse, the nursery maids, knowing that I would not for the world have been so caught by my nimble lord, (for he is in twenty places in a minute) were more affrighted than Diana’s nymphs, when the goddess was surprised by Acteon; and each, instead of surrounding me in order to hide my blushes, was for running in a different way; not so much as attempting to relieve me from the brat.

I was ready to let the little leech drop from my arms. ‘Oh wretch!’ screamed I – ‘Begone – begone!’

Never was a man in greater rapture ...

Charlotte also raises the issue of the position of women in society. This point is taken up by Sir Charles, who displays very modern sensibilities and reflects that

the way that estates are usually divided is unfair to women. Sir Charles promptly puts his thoughts into practice in his generosity towards his sisters.

Claire Tomalin has noted the possibility of the vibrant character of Charlotte inspiring such characters as Elizabeth Bennet. I myself wonder if the way Richardson inspired Jane Austen may have been subtler than direct comparisons of character. She may perhaps have aimed to emulate him in many of his better qualities—creating vivid characters, holding tension and ultimately showing the best of human nature. Perhaps she was also inspired to be different. Southam describes Richardson's novel as lacking her 'organisation and economy'; perhaps she learnt something from his faults and took a delight in being succinct (that the play she based on *Sir Charles Grandison* is so comically short seems to suggest this). Jane Austen might also have studied Richardson's faults and learnt how important it is to end books when you have nothing further to say, and to delight in describing emotions (whether rapture or misery) with a light touch. As well as moving away from the epistolary form, her books move on to territories completely unknown to Richardson, such as having heroines who make mistakes or who are neither very young nor stunningly beautiful.



*MS of Jane Austen's play 'Sir Charles Grandison'*  
(courtesy of Chawton House Library)

Having said this, I am unable to resist two thoughts on possible direct influence. First, although it may have been a common theme at the time, the steadiness of Elinor Dashwood's affection for Edward Ferrars compares well with that of Harriet for Sir Charles. In both cases the young woman loves her man and has good reason to believe him interested in her, except that he has made no declaration of his love; in both cases also, the young woman's friends or relations believe he loves her and this causes her pain in her uncertainty. In both cases, of course, the man feels bound by a previous tie and is ultimately admired more by the woman for his honour in sticking by his former love and is supported in doing his duty. Both resolve to do so up to and after his marriage to the rival. Harriet writes:

I think he ought to be the husband of the lady abroad. And though I prefer him to all the men I ever saw, yet I have resolved, if possible, to conquer the particular regard I have for him.

Both men, of course, are honourably released from their earlier ties so that the ladies' resolutions are not fully tested and the novels are enabled to reach the desired happy conclusion.

Second, in a passage that will stir the interest of any reader looking for Jane Austen's inspiration, Harriet, writing about Sir Charles, says:

But for one's comfort he seems to have one fault; and he owns it – And yet, does not acknowledgment annihilate that fault! – Oh no! for he thinks not of correcting it. This fault is pride.

What Sir Charles has actually said is a much less direct acknowledgement of pride as a fault than is made by Mr Darcy, but it is intriguing to think that Jane Austen had in mind a good man whose one acknowledged fault is pride. Sir Charles, of course, is not at all like Mr Darcy in other respects for he is sociable and universally agreeable, but perhaps there are similarities in their upright principles and their care for their sisters. Mr Darcy is perhaps most like Sir Charles when he sorts out Wickham and Lydia even if he does not succeed (as Sir Charles surely would have done) in making them repent, reform and write copiously of their gratitude towards himself.

### *Bibliography*

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*The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. Margaret Drabble (OUP, 1985).  
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## *Discourse by a French Janeite*

Jean Alphonse Bernard

When I came to Chawton in pilgrimage for the first time, thirty years ago, I arrived very late and missed all the speeches, having taken the wrong train: instead of riding to Alton, I found myself bound for Winchester, both trains leaving Waterloo Station at exactly the same time, which never happens in a French station, as the SNCF makes a point of differentiating departure times by a difference of one or two minutes *always*. And the short speech I expected to make in praise of Jane Austen had to remain unsaid. Thirty years afterwards, I am glad to take it up again, to make atonement for the absence of most of my countrymen.

Why do I like Jane Austen?

The first reason is obvious enough: *she is not French*. She is the epitome of Englishness; to appreciate her is to appreciate the Englishness of the English. I shall always be grateful to the British publisher who, in the course of a business lunch in London in the late sixties, recommended me to read the most English writer, whose name, I must confess, I hardly knew.

If one tries to make a survey of eminent classic writers in the English language, one may perceive why it is so. To any of the names one may enumerate, there comes to mind a comparable French name, so close our literatures were in those earlier times.

Be it Pope, it shall be Boileau  
Dickens, then Balzac  
Shelley, then Chateaubriand or Lamartine  
Coleridge, is almost a cXIX German author  
Thomas Hardy, then Maupassant or Zola  
George Eliot, Georges Sand and so on.

But not Jane Austen, whose name sounds without an echo. First of all because of her language, so sober and fluid, crisp and easygoing at the same time, leaving testimony to (or reflecting) herself, to her sense of decency, to her self restraint, all so eminently English qualities; and every so often a sense of humour so natural as to be instances of humour in its pure state. However, to have the full taste of it, one should read it aloud, as if it were parody; the silent reading is not good enough. To appreciate the quality of her dialogues, one must deliver them as if one were on stage. I am told that in earlier times all readings of books were made aloud: Jane Austen requires the ancient mode of reading.

She is often compared to Shakespeare, odd as it may seem to be. Indeed what they have in common is the gift of making love with words, a happiness with the language as if the language itself were their true subject and not a vehicle for the thought. Jane was content with making love with the language; may I venture to say that this faculty was so developed with her as to make any other love-making weak, ineffective, inferior?

Having said that, I would jump to the opposite position and say that I like Jane Austen *for being so French*, or at least French in a classical sense, a quality of being that we had, that our best authors and quite a few non-writers exhibited as well, a quality we have lost. If one defines classicism in literature as the art of using constraints to produce the maximum effect, she is a most classical French writer. Constraints were many in her life and in her time: physical constraints, moral constraints, lack of money, lack of privacy etc. She had to follow so many rules, rules of property in particular. I have in mind the importance Adam Smith gave to rules of property as the starting plank of his great *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, published with great success in 1759, sixteen years before she was born. Of these many constraints she made as many props to build herself, to overcome them and to make art out of them. She made the most of fiction writing as it was practised before her; using the language of her time, she did not need to change or modify it to suit her purpose, to depict mores, characters, situations and moves of the heart that so befitted her intentions. As such she cannot but count among our great prose writers: Mme de Lafayette, Marivaux, L'Abbé Prévost, Mérimée and Stendhal; as a woman she succeeded in doing so without the terrible exertions of Flaubert, much as her French sisters succeeded in doing, Mme de Lafayette, Mme de Sévigné and more recently Colette.

Lastly, I would turn to the third reason for admiration, the great point as everybody agrees she had: her faculty of creating wonderful living characters: Elinor and Marianne, the Bennets and their five daughters, Catherine Morland, Fanny Price and, among the male figures, Henry Crawford and Darcy. All of them are fully alive, endowed with abundance of animal spirits, clearly designed, yet retaining the complexity, the contradictions of life. What makes them alive is not the ideas they may entertain – in fact they seldom express ideas – but the way they act and how they behave to each other. Mores, manners and human nature are Jane Austen's main ingredients, her subject matter, the inexhaustible resource of each developing drama.

The way a Jane Austen novel takes its course, from careful observation of manners, habits, verbal expressions etc. to the full development of a character, is very much akin to the Proustian scheme. They both start from the same premises to end up with the same result: a true person – Saint Loup or Darcy, Mme Verdurin or Emma. In between, the genius of their designers runs its course in long, winding sentences by Proust, in brief succession of episodes by Jane Austen, by both with the sure touch of a conscious guidance, sudden intuitions or a revealing simile, to discover some abyss of human nature. Above all, they display equally their *vis comica*, a marvellous sense of the comedy of life, even as it borders on cruelty.

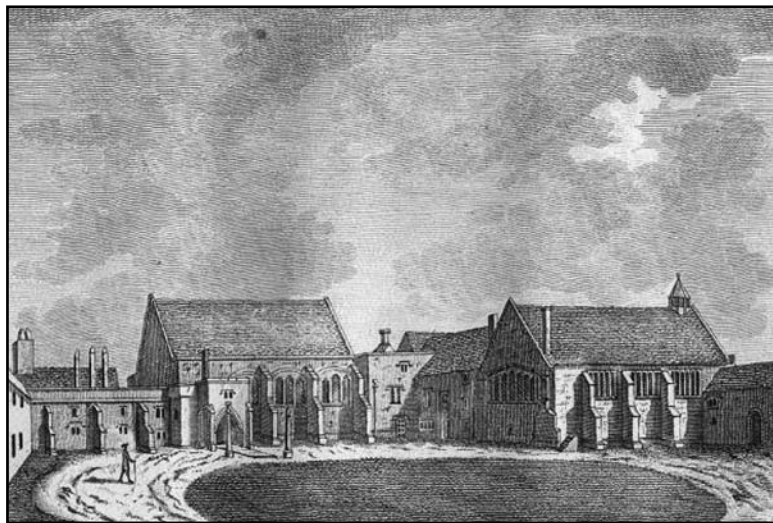
May devout Proustians forgive me if I am inclined to think that Jane Austen shows a kind of moral superiority over Marcel Proust: when he sharpens his pen and focuses his magnifying glass on his characters, he displays a cool objectivity without pity or compassion, a kind of cruelty – for instance in the famous comparison of the Baron de Charlus with a bumble-bee turning around Jupien. It seems to me that Jane, in this case, would have betrayed some kind of Christian

compassion towards the sinner, which Marcel, for many reasons, would not or could not show. Her genius, or if you prefer her daemon, was not a violent one but a gentle angel, who gratified her of another remarkable quality – a deep, natural, ingrained respect for the characters she created, for the reader she was writing for as for herself. One could say that the respect she had for human beings balances exactly the force of her wit and humour.

Out of respect to you, then, I should now close this too long discourse on an author you know better than I and the reasons why, I, as an uncouth Frenchman, like and even love Jane Austen.

## *Croydon*

Maureen Stiller

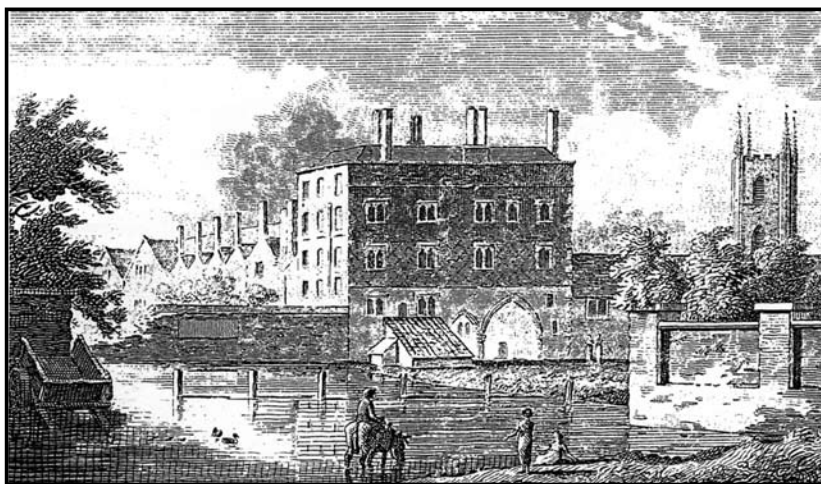


*Croydon Palace, Surrey 1765*

Given the impressive sum raised at the auction of Jane Austen's original manuscript of *The Watsons*, it seemed serendipitous that I had been researching the Croydon of 1804, when she had been writing the story. Having been a long-term resident of the borough, I have always been intrigued by the career of Robert, the heroine Emma's brother, who was 'an attorney in a good way of business' there. Knowing Jane's propensity for burlesque, and with Mrs Elton's references to her brother-in-law being 'in a great way in Bristol' ringing in my ears, I was curious as to why she should have hit on Croydon (suffering currently from a different type of notoriety). Of course, Robert may have commuted to London – it was still within the travelling time that some commuters spend in their daily travels today. But let us suppose his clients were locals.

Croydon was first mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon document of 960 as 'Crogdene', which might be translated as 'crooked valley', a very apt name for the current Brighton Road, which runs south from the centre along a valley, and which in Jane's day was a turnpike. However, excavations from Victorian times onwards have found artefacts and coins from the Neolithic, Celtic and Roman periods. The document also referred to 'Elfsies the Priest of Croydon', and the Domesday Book mentions Croydon church, which was subsequently built on and over during the centuries until it burnt down in 1867 and then rebuilt.

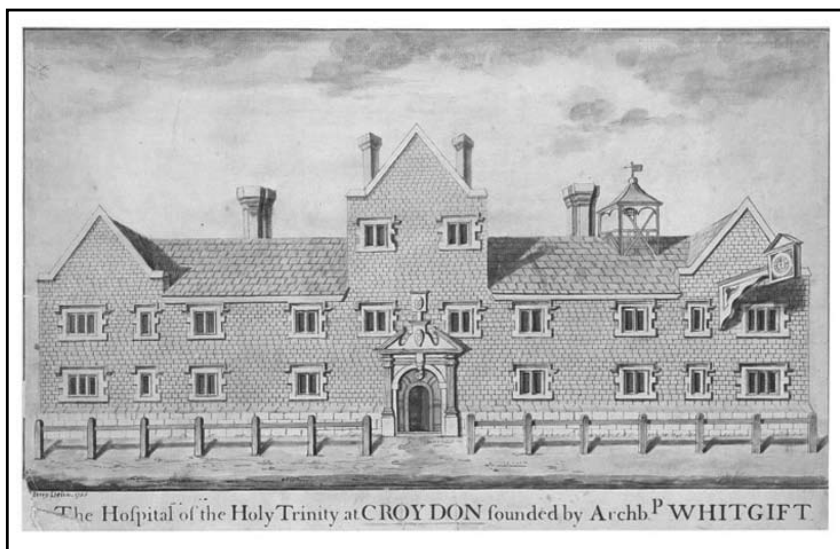
Evidence suggests that Croydon belonged to the Archbishops of Canterbury as early as the 7th or 8th century, and a synod was held there in 809. Archbishop Llanfranc is credited with being the founder of Croydon Palace in 1087 which became a convenient resting place (and one of the many homes of successive Archbishops of Canterbury) between London and Canterbury. This lasted until 1758, when it fell into decay and was considered to be in a 'low and unwholesome situation'. In 1780 it was sold off by auction and became a factory, then a school.



*Croydon Palace after it had been turned into a factory*

One Archbishop, Whitgift, set up the educational Foundation in the 16th century under which still flourish the Trinity and Whitgift Schools for boys and the Old Palace School for girls. He also built almshouses, which still sit in the centre of the shopping area. The Palace as it once stood was a great building, approached by a long avenue, surrounded by courts, yards, stables, vineyard, gardens, meadows, fishponds and streams, and was visited by several monarchs, certainly the first three Edwards, Henry IV, VI and VII, and Elizabeth I. The little that remains, the Great Hall with hammer-beam roof of Spanish chestnut, the chapel, long gallery and guard room were subsequently incorporated into the Old Palace school.



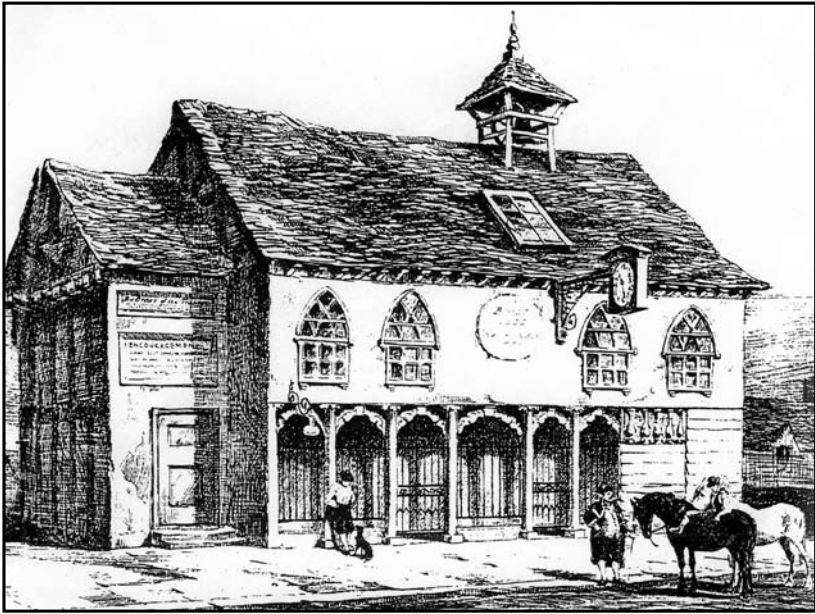


The visits of monarchs and their retinues placed a great strain on the town but also provided opportunities for trade. In 1273, a weekly Wednesday market was granted and in 1276, a 9-day fair in May. During the 18th century, Croydon (like Meryton in *Pride and Prejudice*) was required to billet troops from time to time. While this brought trade, it also caused a shortage of accommodation, especially at market and fair times; and in 1794, as a result of several petitions, barracks were built in the Mitcham Road to alleviate the difficulty.

In 1804 there seem to have been about 1800 houses with some 6000 inhabitants on land that was covered by many springs and streams; the River Bourne being at least 20 ft wide at that point, flooding the Old Town every four years or so. Croydon was a major supplier of grain to London: there were four windmills and according to Daniel Defoe there was 'a great Corn-Market, but chiefly for Oats and Oatmeal, all for London still', cherry orchards (Cherry Orchard Road is a remembrance of this) and a Cherry fair in July; a Cattle fair, and a Walnut fair in October which 'in the eighteenth century was a place where fashionable London society gathered'; it was an article of popular faith that 'walnuts came in at Croydon Fair'. There were also a Butter Market and a small Fish Market. Trout were caught in local streams.

Then there were a wooden Town Hall with overhanging clock and a market underneath, a workhouse which, in more modern times became the Cottage Hospital, and the Pest House for smallpox sufferers, which became Croydon General Hospital (demolished in recent times). And, in 1800, a theatre was built, where Edmund Kean played Richard III.

Some 25 stagecoaches went through, or from, Croydon every day, mostly to London (single fare 2/6d inside and 1/6d outside) and Brighton, but some to Lewes, East Grinstead, Reigate and Eastbourne. A story goes that the Prince of Wales, when changing his horses there (which apparently took only a minute), was



*Town Hall Croydon and butter and poultry market*



*The toll-gate of the Surrey and Sussex Turnpike Trust*

so barracked by the locals for his treatment of his wife that he refused to travel to Brighton through Croydon ever again.

Down the centuries, various members of the aristocracy (even a Lord Darcy), several holding offices under the royalty of the day, had mansions, arable lands, plantations and forests there. William Pitt, his Lord Chancellor and his Navy Secretary were noted as not having paid the due turnpike toll when returning to London after dining with Lord Liverpool in Addiscombe Palace (now the site of semi-detached houses) and indeed 'the old George III had been seen to whip round the corner of Whitgift Hospital with groom behind on his way to Lord Liverpool's'. Many also owned noted packs of beagles, harriers and foxhounds as it was reckoned to be a good hunting area. The 12th Earl of Derby, who had lived at The Oaks (now a park 3 miles west of the town centre) had also owned a pack of staghounds. It was he who instituted the Epsom Oaks horserace in 1779 and gave his name to the subsequent Epsom Derby in 1780.

Consequent upon all this activity there were very many inns and hostelrys, some dating back to the 16th century and some whose names survive today, to provide accommodation for the gentlemen visitors; and stables sprang up for the horses and hounds, together with farriers and blacksmiths. In 1756 there had been 781 guest beds and 1220 stablings. There were also a brewery, a distillery and a wine and spirit business. It was rumoured that the landlady of one inn, the *George*, made some of her lodgers 'disappear' and then boiled up their remains in a cauldron. What with the odd bit of smuggling that was also rumoured to go on, the moveable pillory, the gibbet, stocks and whipping post in Croydon must have come in handy.

A Croydon Act passed in 1797 provided for the enclosure of 2,950 acres of land for the benefit of 'various local gentlemen', leaving just 230 acres scattered around the parish for the poorer inhabitants. Since many cottagers were unable to read or write, they were unable to submit objections to the Act because they were required to be in writing only; the land subsequently proved useless to them and those acres too were sold off for building.

The nouveau riche also moved to Croydon. One story has it that an impoverished gentleman's son from the North came to London as an attorney's clerk, subsequently acting as an accountant for a butcher; on his earnings and thrift, he managed to keep horses and hounds for sport. There was also a farrier, John Unwin, who was a member of Doctors' Commons, the society of lawyers practising civil law in London, who became an agent for buying and selling livings, and when he died in 1789 the widow and children of his nephew came to live in his Croydon home. His nephew had been the Revd Cawthorne Unwin, a great friend and supporter of the poet Cowper and to whom Cowper dedicated a poem.

In 1801, the Croydon Canal was started, though not opened until 1809, the main basin of which is now under West Croydon railway station. At the same time, the Surrey Iron Railway Act allowed for the very first public railway in the world to be constructed and opened in 1803, connecting Wandsworth, Mitcham and Croydon (and the canal) with a branch line to Hackbridge. In 1805 an extension for an 'iron

tram' for freight, with trucks drawn on rails by mules, was built to connect to the Merstham stone quarries. However, by the mid 1830s neither of the competing forms of transport seems to have prospered particularly well.

From all this, it may be deduced that Robert may well have been in a good way of business; that Mrs Robert Watson could genuinely boast that 'they had good society and her parties were select and good', and probably quite right too in her claims that 'they did not attend many of the balls as they were too mixed'. Jane knew her stuff!



*High Street Croydon with the Green Dragon Inn and the Ship Inn still existing today*

*Abstracted from J. Corbet Anderson, A Short Chronicle concerning the Parish of Croydon in the county of Surrey (1882) and J.B. Gent, History of Croydon (1991).*

## *'Foul-Weather Jack' and Jane Austen*

Chris Viveash

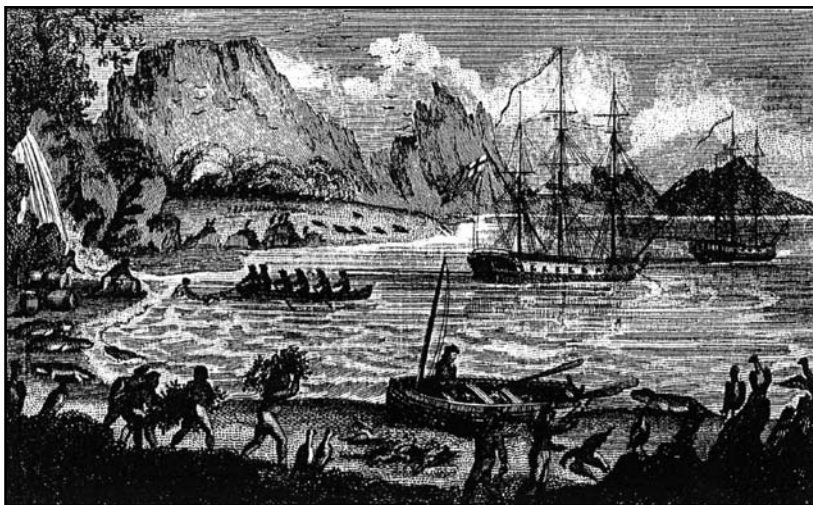


*Commodore John Byron*

On 3 January 1806 Jane Austen presented her favourite nephew, James Edward Austen, with a 'tiny book of voyages', which was an anonymous work published in 1799 by William Lane, of 33 Leadenhall Street, London. Its proper title was *The British Navigator, or A Collection of Voyages Made in Different Parts of the World*,<sup>1</sup> and it consisted of one hundred and forty-four pages. Jane was visiting her brother James and his family at their home at Steventon Rectory, Hampshire. She was accompanied by Martha Lloyd, and together they witnessed the gratifying excitement which the gift occasioned. The promise of thrills and adventures to an eight-year-old boy who was to commence reading it for the first time can be well imagined. It was just the right time of the year for a lad to sit in front of the fire gasping in wonder at the tales of rugged exploration and of frightening encounters with wild painted savages.

When Grandmama Austen arrived at Steventon with another welcome relative, Aunt Cassandra, a few days later, James Edward had probably made some headway with the work and was able to give a graphic account of Foul-Weather Jack's epic journeyings to the Southern Hemisphere, in 1764. The provenance of this small work before Jane Austen acquired it must be a matter of speculation. As she had not previously shown any interest in such tales, possibly she had inherited it from one of her ocean-going brothers. Which of the two men decided to give this work to his sister has not been revealed. It was published in 1799, just when Charles was cruising in home waters, thus making him the probable donor.

Commodore John Byron, grandfather of the poet, was the Foul-Weather Jack involved in the risky venture. He was so called due to his perpetual beastly luck contending with appalling weather on his voyages: seamen had come to dread his command. Twenty years prior to the adventures which were holding young James Edward's attention, Commodore John Byron had taken part in a similar expedition to South America; his vessel was shipwrecked off the coast of Chili.<sup>2</sup> However, this new adventure was a political operation to secure the Falkland Islands as a British protectorate in a grandiose plan devised by Lord Egmont, First Lord of the Admiralty. It involved an expedition to Brazil, and only when leaving Rio de Janeiro, after paying his devoirs to the Governor, sailing on to the Falkland Islands.



*The Tamar and Dolphin at Anchor in Port Egmont 1765*

The warship which Commodore Byron was to command, in July 1764, was the *Dolphin*, which boasted a revolutionary copper-sheathed bottom. *Dolphin* was accompanied by the sloop of war *Tamar*, under Captain Mouat.<sup>3</sup> The ships sailed from Madeira to the Canary Islands, thence to Rio de Janeiro. On they sailed to Port Desire, in Patagonia, where Byron encountered a race of exceptionally tall natives, which he duly noted in his journal. After making gifts to these warriors of tobacco, beads and ribbon he returned to his ship. He was given to exaggeration, however, as the height of these natives was nothing exceptional; he earned much ridicule later over this foolish nonsense.

In January 1765 they discovered a Falklands bay which they named Port Egmont, after the First Lord of the Admiralty. Commodore Byron was unexpectedly attacked by a ferocious sea lion during this adventure. The seamen had many battles



*A Patagonian Woman*



*A doomed sea lion*

with these carnivorous mammals; killing them took six men at least an hour's hard labour. Captain Byron's mastiff dog was almost torn in two by one enormous and rather grumpy sea-lion!<sup>4</sup> Returning to Port Desire they were happy to see the vessel *Florida*, a store ship from England.<sup>5</sup> Problems occurred later in the expedition, whilst exploring the islands of the Pacific Ocean, with the natives who threatened continually to unsheath their daggers and attack the weakened sailors. Scorpions, flies, centipedes and black ants were all described in minute flesh-creeping detail,<sup>6</sup> which must have appalled and yet thrilled James Edward Austen.

Possibly the most stirring event of all was the description of the mariners' handling of their ships during the violent storm on 3 March 1765, and worse later in the month. The relentless ferocity of the mountainous waves and the terrible roar of the troubled ocean were craftily used by Foul-Weather Jack's grandson, Lord Byron, in his epic poem *Don Juan* (Canto the Second). In late July 1765 the intrepid mariners reached Tinian, in the Northern Marianas Islands, where some of the crew developed scurvy, and three subsequently died.<sup>7</sup> The remainder of the company dutifully ate their fresh greens and survived: quite an inducement to a plucky lad to relish his cabbage and sprouts! Three other deaths on this odyssey were attributed to malaria and dysentery. Only one sailor fell overboard, bringing the total number of deaths to seven. Commodore Byron, who was ultimately responsible for the sailors' welfare, did his best to preserve his men for the homeward voyage. Young James Edward would have lots to ask his own sailor-uncles of their exploits at sea, when he saw them next.

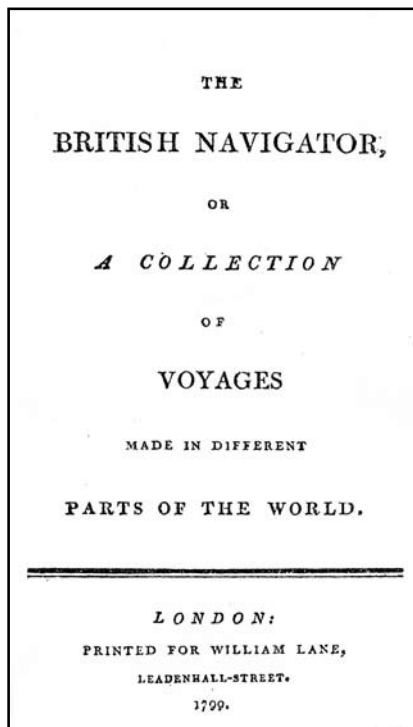


*Captain Samuel Wallis*

Further sea-going enterprises which our youthful reader tackled in the 1799 edition of *The British Navigator* were of the journeys of Captain Wallis and Captain Carteret. Captain Samuel Wallis sailed to the Pacific in 1766-1768 in the same *Dolphin*, which had just returned from Commodore Byron's epic voyage. Wallis was accompanied by Captain Philip Carteret in the battered old sloop the *Swallow*. These exploits were not quite as thrilling to James Edward, but still jolly gripping.



The well-thumbed copy of *The British Navigator* stayed in the Austen-Leigh family for one hundred and seventy years. It was inscribed 'James Edward Austen the gift of his Aunt Jane January 1806' and embellished by an endearingly childish pencil sketch of a ship on the title page.<sup>8</sup> Obviously James Edward Austen had taken the *Dolphin's* expedition and its gallant sailors to his generous young heart.



#### Notes

- 1 Gilson, David, *A Bibliography of Jane Austen* (Winchester, 1997), p. 433.
- 2 Le Faye, Deirdre, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 152.
- 3 Ryskamp, Charles, *Jane Austen* (New York, 1975), p. 11.
- 4 Shankland, Peter, *Byron of the Wager* (London, 1975), pp. 38-41.
- 5 Anonymous, *The British Navigator* (London, 1799), p. 26.
- 6 Ibid., pp. 35-36.
- 7 Ibid., p. 37.
- 8 Ibid., p. 53.
- 9 Cock, R. 'Precursors of Cook: The Voyages of the *Dolphin*, 1764-8', in *The Mariner's Mirror*. Vol. 85. February 1999, pp. 30-49.
- 10 Notes taken privately by J. David Grey in his catalogue of the Jane Austen exhibition of 1975 mounted by the Pierpont Morgan Library, in New York.

*I hereby acknowledge the kind assistance I have received from Sally Matthews of the Bodleian Library, Oxford and Stephen Massil.*

## Notes on sales 2011

Christine Penney

### Manuscripts

For the first time since 2005 a manuscript appeared in the sale room. Sotheby's, London, offered, at Lot 51 on 14 July, 68 pages, hand-trimmed by the author, of the autograph draft manuscript of *The Watsons*. The catalogue entry described it as 'extensively revised and corrected throughout, with crossings out and interlinear additions, loose in nine sections numbered 3 to 11, each section being a gathering of four leaves except the final section (11), which is a bifolium, 8vo (c.190 x 125mm), sections 3-10 formed from single half-sheets of wove paper, watermarked "WS" (sections 4, 5, 6, and 7), countermarked "1803" (sections 3, 8, 9, and 10), section 11 on laid paper watermarked "Curteis & Son", the sections numbered 7, 9 and 10 each having an additional inserted leaf to accommodate extensive revisions, these three leaves originally pinned in place but now loosely inserted and trimmed respectively to 146 x 125 mm, 222 x 120 mm (folded to fit in place) and 135 x 122mm, on laid paper, the insert in section 10 with post-horn watermark bearing initials "MJL"; in total 68 pages plus 6 blanks (these being the versos of the three inserted leaves and the final three pages of the final section), housed in collector's folding box; together with, housed separately in the box, an autograph note signed by the Austen scholar R.W. Chapman concerning the pins originally holding the inserts ("These pins were removed by me for the purpose of transcribing. I suggest that they be not put back in their places, where they must sooner or later corrode the paper"), one pin, and a second note recording provenance by R.W. Chapman and D. A[usten] L[eigh], tear repaired on one leaf in section 5, one leaf in section 9 splitting at fold, occasional very slight spotting.' The provenance was: Cassandra Austen, sister of Jane (d.1845); her niece Caroline Mary Craven Austen (1805-1880); her nephew William Austen-Leigh; thence by descent to Joan Austen-Leigh of Victoria, British Columbia. The manuscript was sold at Sotheby's on 25 July 1978, Lot 322, for £38,000, to the British Rail Pension Fund and sold by them to the present vendor at Sotheby's on 27 September 1988, Lot 109, for £90,000.

The previous two sales of this manuscript were both recorded by David Gilson in the *Reports* for 1978 and 1989. This portion of the work was not complete. The first six leaves were sold by an Austen descendant in 1915 in aid of the Red Cross and are now in the Morgan Library, New York. The next few leaves were inexplicably lost by Queen Mary College, University of London, which had been looking after it for the present vendor. The college's director of library services, Emma Bull, said it happened six years ago, before she arrived, and had resulted in a full investigation. Sadly this did not establish what had happened. There had been a hope that the leaves would turn up, but this is now considered to

be unlikely. Estimated at £200,000-£300,000, it was purchased by the Bodleian Library for £993,250, the largest sum so far realised for any Jane Austen item.

## **First and early editions**

### *Sense and Sensibility*

Lot 50 at Sotheby's, New York, on 17 June was a copy of the first edition, 1811 (Gilson A1). Lacking the half-title in Vol. 1 and the terminal blanks in all 3 vols., the half-title to Vol. 3 guarded, with strong offsetting from the morocco library label in Vol. 1 to the title-page, it was bound in half mottled calf over marbled boards, the spines in 6 compartments, with russet and black lettering and numbering pieces, plain endpapers, and the edges uniformly marbled with boards. Estimated at \$15,000-\$25,000 it sold for \$28,125. Another copy was Lot 50 at Sotheby's, London, on 14 July, sold in aid of CAFOD (the Catholic Overseas Development Agency). This was R.W. Chapman's copy, with 30 pencilled corrections or queries in the margins, and his book-label and pencil ownership signature dated 'Oxford, Dec. 1919' in Vol. 1. It was bound, without the half-titles or final blanks, in contemporary half calf, rubbed and with the joints partially cracked, with marbled boards and gilt spines. An ink inscription 'T. Blyth's' (a circulating library?) was in all volumes, which were preserved in a brown cloth folding box. The estimate was £25,000-£30,000 and it sold for £31,250. This copy appeared in my report for 2002, when it was offered by Quaritch's for £35,000, having been previously sold at Sotheby's on 19 July 1976 for £140. The copy is described in Gilson A1 (ix).

### *Pride and Prejudice*

Lot 5 at Sotheby's, New York, on 17 June, was a copy of the first edition, 1813 (Gilson A3), bearing the 19th-century bookplate of Susanna Oyler. With the half-titles, it had light, scattered staining in all 3 vols. but was described as a clean copy, in contemporary mottled calf, smooth spines with gilt rules resembling chained links, the spine labels lacking on Vols. 1 and 2. The boards of Vol. 1 were detached. Estimated at \$25,000-\$35,000 it sold for \$35,000. Lot 51 in the same sale was another copy. Lacking the half-titles and bound in modern half black calf over marbled boards, washed and pressed with residual staining and browning it was estimated at \$10,000-\$15,000 and sold for \$20,000.

Lot 387 at the Bloomsbury sale on 12 May was a copy of the third edition, 1817 (Gilson A5). It lacked the half-titles and had the blank O2 in Vol.1. An ink ownership inscription, 'M A Williams, June 4th, 1819', was on both title-pages. With occasional light foxing or spotting and a few small stains it was bound in contemporary half calf, rubbed and the upper joints splitting, flat spines gilt and with green leather labels. The estimate was £1,000-£1,500. It sold for £1,600.

Lot 3088 at Toovey's, Washington (UK), on 25 January was a copy of Bentley's Standard Novels edition, 1833 (Gilson D5). In the original cloth, but lacking the upper cover and spine and with the engravings spotted and browned, it was estimated at £60-£100 and sold for £400.

### *Mansfield Park*

Lot 52 at Sotheby's, New York, on 17 June was a copy of the first edition, 1814 (Gilson A6). It lacked the half-titles and final blanks in Vols. 2 and 3 and was bound in modern brown buckram with a black morocco spine. The estimate was \$6,000-\$8,000 and it sold for \$5,625.

Lot 699P at Golding Young and Thomas, Lincoln, on 20 April was baldly described as 'A copy of Mansfield Park by Jane Austen printed by Richard Bentley and dated 1833', possibly Gilson D3 or part of D6. It was estimated at £80-£100 but sold for only £20.

### *Emma*

Lot 53 at Sotheby's, New York on 17 June was a copy of the first edition, 1816 (Gilson A8). It had the half-titles, was washed and pressed with some residual foxing and staining, particularly to the half-titles, and with a short split to the Vol. 1 half-title near the gutter. The binding was half mottled calf, with marbled boards, spines in six compartments, two reserved for lettering pieces, the others ornamented with gilt marguerites and floral corner pieces, plain endpapers, top edges gilt. The joints and spine ends were a trifle rubbed and the endpapers renewed and the volumes were held in a blue holland paper slipcase, faded and stained. Estimated at \$10,000-\$15,000 it failed to sell.

### *Northanger Abbey and Persuasion*

Lot 390 at the Bloomsbury sale on 12 May was a copy of the first edition, 1818 (Gilson A9). It lacked the half-titles and was bound in contemporary half calf, flat spines gilt with green leather labels. The upper joint of Vol. 1 was splitting and there was occasional spotting and foxing. The title-pages to all but Vol.3 bore the ink ownership inscriptions 'M A Williams, June 4th, 1819', who also owned the similarly bound copy of the third edition of *Pride and Prejudice* in the same sale, mentioned above. Estimated at £2,000-£3,000 it sold for £2,800. Lot 54 at Sotheby's, New York, on 17 June was another copy, lacking the half-titles in Vols. 2 and 4 and the blanks P7-8 in Vol. 4. There was marginal offsetting to the title-pages from the bindings and it was washed and pressed with some residual toning and foxing. It was uniformly bound with *Emma* in the same sale (see above) in a blue holland paper slipcase, faded and stained. Estimated at \$6,000-\$8,000 it also failed to sell.

A copy of the first American edition of *Persuasion*, 1832 (Gilson B3), was Lot 210 on 22 January at Case Antiques, Knoxville. It was in the original boards with muslin spines and paper labels, all in fair to poor condition with significant losses, wear and staining and some foxing to pages. The owner inscriptions 'Abram Maury' were on the flyleaf and front page of Vol. 1 and the first page and back cover of Vol.2. Abram Poindexter Maury (1801-1848), was a member of the founding family of Franklin, TN., Treelawn Plantation. The estimate was \$600-\$900 and it sold for \$805.

### Collected editions

Bearnes, Hampton and Littlewood, Honiton, had a set of Richard Bentley's first collected edition, 1833 (Gilson D6), at Lot 171 on 30 March, with the frontispiece and vignette title to each volume and bound in half morocco marbled boards. Estimated at £500-£1,000 it sold for £2,800.

Lot 49 at Sotheby's, London on 14 July was another set. The frontispieces and vignette titles were present in Vols. XXIII, XXVII, XXVIII and XXX and the series title pages in Vols. XXIII, XXVII, and XXVIII. The bindings were contemporary calf, lettered and numbered on the spines, two volumes rebacked, joints partially split, some repairs, some pages browned, soiled or with a few tears. The gilt device and lettering on the upper covers stated the set was bound for the Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow. Estimated at £1,500-£2,000 the set sold for £1,875.

### Other material

Lot 306 at Bloomsbury on 27 October was a copy of the first edition, 1796, of Fanny Burney's *Camilla*, which includes 'Miss J Austen, Steventon' in the list of subscribers. In contemporary half calf, rebacked, rubbed and with new endpapers, it was estimated at £300-£400 but sold for only £260.

Eldred's of East Dennis, USA, offered a set of six books at Lot 62 on 29 January. The second item was the tenth edition of John Pearson's *An Exposition of the Creed*, London, 1715. Bound in full calf but in poor condition, with losses to the front end papers and frontispiece, it had the bookplate of Brook Edward Bridges, depicting a bust portrait of a black woman resting upon a five-pointed crown. The Revd Brook Edward Bridges (1779-1825) was one of Elizabeth Austen's younger brothers and is mentioned frequently in Jane Austen's letters. The Lot was estimated at \$150-\$250 but failed to sell.

Bonhams & Butterfields, New York, offered at Lot 50 on 18 October a copy of Charles Dickens's *Master Humphrey's Clock*, 1840-41 in 3 volumes, bound in half calf and marbled boards from the weekly parts. The provenance was Henry Morland Austen (1823-1904), a grandson of Francis Motley Austen and thus a distant cousin of Jane Austen (whom she obviously never met); his armorial bookplate was in each volume. The estimate was \$1,200-\$1,800 and it sold for \$1,500. It is impossible to say whether the remote association with Jane Austen or the status of a Dickens first edition was the unique selling point.

Lot 148 at Dreweatts, Godalming, on 19 January consisted of two 18th-century style oval copy portrait miniatures, one signed Nattier, one Smith, both in rectangular ivory frames, together with an ivory musical box set with a pastoral love scene, a framed, but unidentified, print of Jane Austen, and a pair of lorgnettes. The estimate was £70-£100. They sold for £260.

Nigel Ward and Co., Hereford had, at Lot 2055 on 24 September a signed, framed and mounted etching described as 'The home of Jane Austin [sic]', Lyme Regis. Deirdre Le Faye suggests this was the house called 'Wings', where the Austens were incorrectly assumed to have stayed. No estimate was given but it sold for £15.

Bonhams on 29 March offered, at Lot 6, a supposed portrait of Jane Austen by an unknown artist. It was a half-length, in wash and pencil, highlighted with chalk, on vellum, inscribed on the verso in a small contemporary hand 'Miss Jane Austin [sic]' and with the location or inventory number 'A76', in a contemporary gilt frame, with attached identification label 'Jane Austen B. 1775 - D. 1817', chalk numbers on verso of frame '166 8234' and inscribed on the old backing board in an early nineteenth-century hand 'Price 3-3s 0d Frame 0 5s 0d.' and with chalk mark 'A68'. No date was given but 1818 was conjectured. Estimated at £1,000-£2,000 it sold for £2,160. This portrait was reproduced in the *Report* for 2007 as one of the illustrations to Deirdre Le Faye's article 'Imaginary portraits of Jane Austen'. The portrait was then in the possession of the dealer Roy Davids, with whom she subsequently had some correspondence before the sale. The catalogue referred to her article but suggested the portrait went 'beyond Henry Austen's description of his sister in catching Austen family characteristics, including the somewhat elongated large nose and somewhat pointed chin'. Members of the Society doubtless consider Deirdre Le Faye's dismissal of the drawing as anything other than imaginary to be sufficient, but the excited new owner succeeded in gaining the interests of the media in time for Boxing Day, when the requirements of what is considered to make 'good television' took precedence over sound scholarship.

Lot 2 at Bonhams, Kidlington on 30 March was an English School silhouette, circa 1810, described as a silhouette of Cassandra Austen, shoulder length, profile to the left, wearing dress and fill-in, her hair upswept. It was in black cut-out, watercolour and graphite on card, gilt-mounted on a black papier-mache frame, inscribed on the reverse 'Cassandra Austin/ Jane's Sister'. With it was offered a further silhouette of an older Lady, shoulder length, profile to the left, wearing dress and bonnet, also in black cut-out and watercolour on card, gilt-mounted on black papier-mache frame. Estimated at £100-£150 it sold for £200 and is now in the collection of Deirdre Le Faye.

Lot 267 at the Showplace Antique & Design Center, New York, on 27 February offered three of Charles Edmund Brock's signed and dated watercolour and ink illustrations depicting scenes from *Persuasion*, 1903-1904. The scenes were not identified. The provenance was given as J.M. Dent and Co., June 1987, Lot 769, when the original set of eighteen drawings were sold for £33,000. The estimate was \$1,500-\$2,500 but they failed to sell. These drawings were from the same set that was later sold at Christie's on 2 June 2010 (see last year's report).

On 16 June Dominic Winter offered, at Lot 81, eighteen of Brock's original pen and ink and watercolour drawings for Dent's edition of *Northanger Abbey*, 1907. They comprised the title-page and seventeen illustrations, each within a decorative border, all but the title-page signed and dated 1907, tipped-in to card folders, together with a publisher's file copy of the book for which they were produced, in its original gilt decorated cloth, the rear cover dusty but generally in bright condition. The seventeen illustrations were titled: 'It was the air and attitude of a Montoni!'; 'Mr and Mrs Morland's surprize ... was considerable'; 'Mr John Thorpe'; 'Mr Allen ... drinking his glass of water'; 'Catherine grows

quite a good-looking girl'; "Pray, pray stop, Mr. Thorpe"; "Well, Miss Morland ... I hope you have had an agreeable ball"; 'Their joy on this meeting was very great'; 'The luxury of a ... frightened imagination over the pages of Udolpho'; 'They would not go without her'; 'Making her one of the most graceful bows'; "A famous good thing this marrying scheme!"; "Can you stand such a ceremony as this!"; "It was my mother's favourite walk"; "Good God! How came you up that staircase?"; 'A charming game with a litter of puppies' and 'Introduced ... as "Mr. Henry Tilney"'. Estimated at £7,000-£10,000 they sold for only £6,800.

Bloomsbury, on 19 April at Lot 382, offered six ink drawings by M.V. Wheelhouse to illustrate the works of Jane Austen and Elizabeth Gaskell, comprising scenes from *Northanger Abbey*, *Mansfield Park*, *Cranford* (2), *Mary Barton* and *Sylvia's Lovers*. The drawings were signed (the first with initials), mounted on card, numbered 2, 4 and 5-8 and captioned in pencil on mounts measuring 250mm. by 153mm. They were reproduced in *The Austen-Gaskell Book: scenes from the works of Jane Austen and Mrs Gaskell, edited by J Compton, illustrated by M V Wheelhouse*, London, 1926 (Gilson E155). Estimated at £150-£200 they sold for £320.

In February John Underwood, Antiquarian Books, notified the Kent Branch of the Society of the manuscript diary of Thomas Weston of Tenterden, a wealthy grazier with sheep on Romney Marsh. The item was a farming diary for 1793. Weston was acquainted with Francis Motley Austen (the son of Jane's great uncle) and his son John, who receive occasional mentions. The asking price was £2,750. Mr Underwood tells me that he has sold the manuscript to another dealer in Kent.

In March we heard that a 'rare objects' collector was hoping to sell an undated letter from William John Chute (1757-1824) to a Mr Grimston. The blurb attached stated that Chute was aged 22 at the time and writing from Angers (presumably in 1779 if he was 22). The blurb also said that his return to the UK (at an unspecified date) provoked local gossip which is thought to have been used in the opening of *Pride and Prejudice* and that he may have been the inspiration for the single man in want of a wife. No source was given for this anecdote. However, Chute became MP for Hampshire in 1790, inherited the Vyne in 1791 and married in 1793 – all well before the first draft of the novel began in 1796. He is mentioned in a few of Jane Austen's letters from 1796 onwards and sometimes provided the family with franks. Any other association must be conjectural but it would be interesting to know its source. The price was £480 plus VAT, so the Society was not tempted and so far it has not come to the attention of the media either.

In my last report I mentioned a copy of the first edition of *Pride and Prejudice* which had the bookplate of William M Fitzhugh, Jr. I suggested this might be William Fitzhugh of Southampton, whose family Jane Austen mentions in her letters. I often wonder how assiduously these rather dry reports are read and was therefore delighted to read the letter from Dick FitzHugh in the *NewsLetter* for October 2011, identifying the owner as a distant cousin of his family, born 1901, the son of William MacPherson Fitzhugh, who was a geologist and friend of President Hoover.

# Jane Austen studies

David Selwyn

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# *In search of Mr Darcy*

Janet Todd

This paper comes from my sense of unease at *Pride and Prejudice*, a book that is the synecdoche of Jane Austen for most of the world, her global brand, and at its centre is – now – the hero. Like Sherlock Holmes Mr Darcy has transcended the fiction that gave him birth. In Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's words, he lives 'in some fantastic limbo of the children of the imagination, some strange impossible place'.

## **Part 1**

We say that a book is another country, or as Margaret Atwood put it, 'You enter it, but then you must leave: like the Underworld, you can't live there'; the novelist must write 'the end', and only readers should go on if they dare.<sup>1</sup> But we do go on, and so – naughtily – do some authors. Jane Austen's nephew James Edward Austen Leigh wrote that his aunt 'took a kind of parental interest in the beings she had created, and did not dismiss them from her thoughts when she had finished her last chapter ... She would if asked tell us many particulars about the subsequent career of some of her people'.<sup>2</sup> In contrast Samuel Beckett said he knew nothing of his characters beyond what he had written. I am, however, not so much interested in the 'subsequent career' or the afterlife, but in the *parallel* life, the life of a child of the imagination in and out of the book where he was born.

Let's look first at the Mr Darcy in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. This novel departs most thoroughly from the probabilistic fiction with which the author is most credited; it is a book that uniquely among her works evokes fantasy, fairy story, the tale of Cinderella, the archetypal catching of a prince through merit and some beauty. Being fictional, Mr Darcy is known as no person ever is in life, and he is freighted with the crudeness of repeated dreams. Popular art doesn't much question itself any more than fairy tales do. The myth critic Northrop Frye noted that 'the uninhibited imagination ... produces highly conventionalised art': he was talking about structure but the remark works for character in popular fiction where there is a strong demand for stylized formulaic narratives to support it.<sup>3</sup> A reader of *Pride and Prejudice* can let her mind or imagination reproduce and luxuriate in the fairy-tale myth element that is in the novel despite the fact that it is delivered under a realistic carapace.

Darcy enters the novel with every advantage of person – large, tall, handsome – and of assets – the round fictional number of £10,000 a year and a very large house. But he ruins the good impression by boorishness. His manners are extremely bad, and only Mrs Bennet really addresses the problem, accusing him of lacking a 'right disposition'.<sup>4</sup> As well as to Mrs Bennet, he is rude to Miss Bingley (whose jealousy is obvious, yet he goes on provoking her), sometimes

Bingley (did he choose him for a friend because he was shorter and less well born, not just, as Elizabeth surmises, pliable?), Sir William Lucas, Charlotte and Mr Collins – indeed, anyone he regards as socially beneath him (so not to his aunt Lady Catherine, whom he resembles except that she is formidable through words, he through silence, and his cousin the Honourable Colonel, to whom he boasts of his success in defeating his friend's match with a middle class girl).<sup>5</sup> He is above being pleased; he believes he has a right not to be, accepting that manners are 'natural' and not the result of effort and practice. He is morose and fastidious, frightening the spirit out of his shy sister and anyone else at home with him on a boring Sunday. He has no easiness in conversation or letter-writing, studying only to show his superiority; Mrs Bennet says he is one of 'those persons who fancy themselves very important and never open their mouths' (p. 48). But he is 'surprised' when anyone else is silent and fails to entertain.

Haughty and reserved, immensely proud of high birth, assuming he has 'a real superiority of mind' and is among 'the wisest and the best' of men with 'a strong understanding' which he insists must not be ridiculed, he knows himself so slenderly as a social being that he thinks he lacks improper pride (and here of course things are complicated by Charlotte and to some extent the narrator, who are remarkably Burkean about birth and riches). He cannot forget or forgive 'follies and vices of others' and admits to being 'resentful', seeing the attribute as, perhaps not a virtue, but not quite a vice either (p. 63). Even taking into account what we later learn of the dastardly Wickham, this remains an uncomfortable aspect. The narrator calls him 'clever' but is it clever constantly to be giving offence, or advantageous to lack what *Persuasion* calls 'elasticity' of mind?

Darcy has no sense of enlightened civic duty becoming a public virtue in British culture in the eighteenth century in fiction and life, as dominant men were socialised out of old fashioned laissez-faire in sexuality and social life.<sup>6</sup> 'I am ill-qualified to recommend myself to strangers' is his boast. 'We neither of us perform to strangers,' he says to Elizabeth, but in the new English civic society no citizen is a 'stranger' and accommodation to all companions was the goal (pp. 196-7). In the proposal scene Darcy seems to think truth trumps ordinary politeness, as if the feelings of another cannot defeat the urge to self-expression. 'Disguise of every sort is my abhorrence,' he declares, but disguise is, as eighteenth-century social philosophers were never tired of declaring, necessary for society to function. Bingley is truly civil and he forces his sister 'to be civil also, and say what the occasion required' (pp. 215 and 49). He gets nowhere with his friend; Darcy makes degrading assumptions about others every time he opens his mouth, and he accepts that a rich man, whether himself or Bingley, has a right to consider his own appetite only and has no responsibility to a neighbourhood. In short Darcy has no concern for 'the convenience of the world'. The proper pride of aristocracy trumps the affability of the gentleman: genealogy over geniality. In fact Darcy is so bad he is almost comic in the early pages; perhaps in the original, probably far more satiric, 'First Impressions' he may well have been as straightforwardly ridiculous as the dazzling Charles Adams from 'Jack and Alice'.

Does this arrogant man think of women? Not much. He believes his notice gives consequence to any girl – certainly to a portionless, pushy one with nice eyes. Any sign of admiration from him must, he feels, ‘elevate her with the hope of influencing his felicity’ (p. 66). When he follows his devastating critique of the Bennet family with a proposal of marriage, Elizabeth ‘could easily see that he had no doubt of a favourable answer. He *spoke* of apprehension and anxiety, but his countenance expressed real security.’ (p. 212) Where Charlotte Lucas asks only for reasonable humour and financial competence in a *man*, Darcy demands that this subordinate *woman* – she who is to be chosen, not choosing – have every accomplishment, intellectual, social and physical, and still find time for extensive reading. In their attitude to women Darcy and Mr Collins mirror each other: both impose on Elizabeth (and in her private domestic space) crude addresses based on a failure to rate the sex as individuals but simply members of a subordinate group.

Darcy’s first movement towards Elizabeth is mastering; he rudely stares at her, then eavesdrops when he will: he has a perfect right to look, to overhear and to perplex, it seems. No woman seeking marriage could act like this (though, and here I anticipate, Keira Knightley as Elizabeth does just this in the contemporary film by Joe Wright with its continuous tracking of the female look). He may enjoy Elizabeth’s ‘easy playfulness’ but provides no play in return. When she replies wittily to his lumpen remark that poetry is the food of love, ‘Darcy only smiled’, a social improvement, perhaps, but no use in promoting the necessary sociability. Why should he be the entertainer? Women are the ones to entertain and flirt – and they do. The word ‘archly’ is frequently used for Elizabeth, who responds to the condescension of consequence with pertness; the equivalent Darcy adverbs are ‘gravely’ and ‘coldly’: *he* may be silent and wait because all women, even Elizabeth, will in the end try to please (the only time Elizabeth provides coldness is just before his marriage proposal and just after she has learnt of his disgraceful interference in her sister’s life; his response is ‘affected incredulity’).

When one woman manages, in her words, to cheat this man of ‘premeditated contempt’, he falls in love and then blames the woman for his predicament: he has been ‘bewitched’, for all the world as if he were Henry VIII contemplating Anne Boleyn. Now he grows obsessive, even more silent, and conflicted; he gives nothing away of his feelings to his friend, or anyone else (only worldly-wise Charlotte, standing in the wings at Netherfield, notices much; later she will perhaps become facilitator of an affair that can benefit herself and her new husband). Meanwhile Darcy’s effect on the woman he has deigned to love is powerful, and predictable: it diminishes her individual and personal consequence and dents her spontaneity. Faced with his own relative’s ‘ill-breeding’, Darcy simply ‘looked a little ashamed ... and made no answer’ (p. 195). At the same time he assumes that Elizabeth will be mortified by an attack on the manners of her family.

To suit her man, Elizabeth may retain what is likable and keep to some extent her critical intelligence, but she sheds her ‘conceited independence’, her earlier refusal to see herself as a marriageable commodity, and she exchanges the verbal

impertinence of Rosings for the maidenly and silent confusion of Pemberley – and she a heroine who has supremely constructed herself through language. Soon after meeting Darcy she is described as checking a laugh, hiding a smile, very much as Frances Burney's almost conduct-book heroine learns to do before her upwardly mobile marriage to Lord Orville in *Evelina* (1778); under Darcy's influence Elizabeth controls further what Miss Bingley describes as 'that little something, bordering on conceit and impertinence' (p. 57) and subdues her individualistic tendencies in the interest of hierarchical social harmony. Her egalitarian political views soften too. She has noted at first that Wickham's guilt seemed equal to his humble descent, and, musing over Darcy's treatment of Jane, considered his objection must have been her 'having one uncle who was a country attorney, and another who was in business in London' (p. 209); however, the Darcy letter, delivered with 'haughty composure' and providing an explanation about Wickham which is owed not primarily to her but to himself and in which he declares he must state again the defects of her nearest relations, starts a transformation directed towards her social and economic interests. On first perusal of the letter she sees only 'pride and insolence'; on second she is mortified at *herself*. Darcy's reproach has become merited and 'her sense of shame was severe' (p. 231). With one unmannerly letter this 'squeamish youth', to use Mr Bennet's resonant phrase, has made her thoroughly ashamed of a family of lawyers and tradespeople she had lived with comfortably and laughed at – and with – for 21 years.

As for her class feeling, having spied Pemberley she finds man and property coalescing. In the classic English novel, as Alistair Duckworth has argued, the 'logic of the metonym' influences how estates and landscapes are presented so that houses 'play a variety of coded roles'.<sup>7</sup> Big handsome Darcy is expressed by his house, described as 'large, handsome' and 'standing well'. Even external aspects of his grounds are big: they are 'rising' and 'a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater ... Elizabeth was delighted' (p. 271). As the book's habitual irony falters before the estate, so it does before the owner, as the adjective 'handsome' is used for the place and by the housekeeper for the master; in the latter case it extends over physical and social qualities. Despite her earlier determination to note landscape in detail, Elizabeth aids the coalescing by seeing only the newly admirable Darcy in the stones of his estate.<sup>8</sup> With renewed hopes, Elizabeth is insisting on herself as a gentleman's daughter, not the niece of a tradesman. And now she craves a mastering man with power over pleasure and pain, lord of all he surveys, allowing her to be mistress of grand rooms and elegant furniture, and also to be the student of a benefactor and teacher with superior 'judgment, information, and knowledge of the world': it is convenient that knowledge and property so nicely coincide.<sup>9</sup> Soon the man will cap these roles by taking over from Mrs Bennet the role of family manager: he, not she, will get her girls married.

Where in the loving process the woman has marketed herself without her family and has learnt how to find a man to value her mind and virtue and raise her rank without the commodification implied in Mr Collins's proposal but with all

the compromises a social rise demands, the man has learnt what? Not a lot, but some social conformity, or he could not have been polite to Elizabeth's inferior relatives and made a second proposal: he could not have become in her words 'perfectly amiable'. She has, one might argue, civilised him a little.<sup>10</sup> So between them, Darcy and Elizabeth have followed the old trajectory of the eighteenth-century hero and heroine. As many critics have wearily put it, they have acted out a conservative ideology whereby the dominance of the rigid ruling class is softened by some energy and virtue rising from below; the inheritance of the forefathers is renovated, not reformed. It is a fantasy beloved of the literate middle orders in the eighteenth century, hence the huge popularity of Samuel Richardson's iconic *Pamela* (1740) and its hero Mr B. Mr Darcy takes on the mantle of the polite eighteenth-century gentleman, Richardson's Mr B and his other good hero, Charles Grandison, or his female-created equivalent, Burney's Lord Orville; the last two heroes were created in part as models for men to study and copy.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps for the canonical novel, though certainly not for popular romance, the repeated pattern stops with Darcy and Elizabeth. In *Pride and Prejudice* at least Jane Austen becomes the last 'classic' writer really to bring social and individual so resoundingly together, to unite a civil and semi-feudal society of best master and landlord all at once in the satisfying dénouement that solves *all* the problems of the heroine.<sup>12</sup>

## Part 2

But Darcy is *not* Mr B or Lord Orville, about whom the present general public knows, and wants to know, next to nothing; for, unlike Richardson and Burney, Jane Austen commands intense modern interest. The Darcy that is the Sherlock Holmes of the popular fantasised Regency period is a result of several cultural developments, the first of which was the arrival of the Romantic hero round about the time Jane Austen was publishing and dying.

The first critics of *Pride and Prejudice* hardly mentioned the hero; the talk was primarily of the charming heroine Elizabeth, the comic Mr Collins and the 'delineation of domestic scenes', with Walter Scott complaining, in general, of too much emphasis on the minor characters.<sup>13</sup> An exception was Annabella Milbanke, who said of the novel that the interest is 'very strong, especially for Mr. Darcy'.<sup>14</sup> This exception is marvellously apt. For in 1813 there was much discussion of another hero, Childe Harold, and his avatars the heroes of the *Oriental Tales*, none a million miles away from one aspect of Darcy. The author of these poems was of course Lord Byron, Miss Milbanke's future husband. The consonance of *Pride and Prejudice*, alone out of Jane Austen's works, with the new phenomenon of the Byronic hero gives the character in and out of the book enormous and unprecedented appeal to many much later readers, especially women. In the early nineteenth century, with some help from Mrs Radcliffe's gothic, Byron created in himself and his poetry the image of the new hero, something of a reprise of the old aristocrat but far more sexy and moody. From him derives a whole line of



similarly stern, powerful, self-obsessed and fascinating men from Mr Rochester and Heathcliff to Dracula and Maxim de Winter. For all of these the ‘implacability of ... resentments’ and ‘unforgiving temper’ of the early Darcy are fine, indeed requisite; and in all of them a proud temper may lead to some acts of feudal generosity, as Wickham notes for Darcy. Incidentally, Wickham, whom Elizabeth spontaneously fancies without help of real estate, could not have become the Romantic hero even had he a fortune, since he boasts ‘all the best part of beauty ... and very pleasing address’, is ‘unassuming’ and has ‘a happy readiness of conversation’ (p. 81). This won’t do at all: the hero must keep his distance, his mastery and his mystery, and would be better frightening the world with his ‘high and imposing manners’ than readily engaging in small talk; and, despite appreciating good and easy manners in women, Jane Austen seems to dislike them more and more as the main defining mark of her menfolk, as can be seen in her demolition of Frank Churchill in *Emma* and, even more, of that gentleman of most easy address, Mr Elliot of *Persuasion*. Indeed in this respect she is in the tradition of middle-class authors who disliked the gentlemanly polite image as aristocratic and hypocritical; to these the *Letters Written by Lord Chesterfield to his Son* (1774), was of course a godsend with its exposure of manners as a mere veneer for manipulation and hedonism. The Romantic hero has no such veneer: he does not seek to please; he does what he likes, not what another likes, and provokes an intense response. He does so, because, as Colonel Fitzwilliam notes of Darcy, he has the means and the power. In this sort of romance the obstacles that create and then obstruct desire – the romantic story-line – reside in the hero as much as in the external world.

It is ironic that Charlotte Brontë wrote that in *Pride and Prejudice* she found ‘a carefully-fenced, highly cultivated garden with neat borders and delicate flowers’.<sup>15</sup> Later readers ensured that Mr Darcy at least stepped out of this garden. For there is some generic resemblance between Darcy and the Byronic hero and Heathcliff, Mr Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, and Grandcourt in *Daniel Deronda*, though Darcy’s arrogance is not as thoroughly assaulted and humbled as most of his successors’ and there is far less anguish in the progress. But he is not quite like these men, any more than he is quite like Sir Charles Grandison or Lord Orville; his distinction is to promise a combination of the old social and civic progress with the new sexual charisma of the Romantic hero. The book makes the types consecutive: hero, then polite gentleman; but in the popular imagination they coalesce.<sup>16</sup> This is a good and productive fantasy for after all, marrying Byron or Heathcliff was not a success for any woman, Anabella Milbanke or poor Isabella Linton.

Nowadays readers of the novel no longer monopolize the conversation on *Pride and Prejudice*. Many different communities of television, film and internet have made Darcy their commodity, letting him almost escape the book and free float. Because of cinema, the smouldering look that is by no means a reflection of the fictional character’s invariable attitude can dominate and deliver introspection, passion and desire in a way impossible in the novel. What would Jane Austen

have thought? Only ‘a mind well accustomed to resignation,’ George Eliot told John Blackwood in 1877, ‘can bear to see its vivid conceptions altered by the mind and hand of another person.’<sup>17</sup> She was writing about shoddy illustrations, but the remark might pertain even more to film. Henry James famously criticized ‘publishers, editors, illustrators, producers of the pleasant twaddle of magazines’ for having bent Jane Austen to ‘their material purpose, so amenable to pretty reproduction in every variety’, and provoking ‘mechanical and overdone reactions’ on the part of readers and spectators. He did not imagine a tenth of it.<sup>18</sup>

When a character escapes and leaves the fictional home of his birth, does he remain that character in any meaningful way? Can the man or name remain at all authentic when customers or consumers are free to make any use of what he or it refers to or when adapters of their vehicle have their own political or psychological agendas? It’s a hard question. I am not here discussing identification or what Dr Johnson, writing about biography, described as putting ourselves in the ‘condition of him whose fortune we contemplate’, learning and provoking feeling in the process, a rather narcissistic business.<sup>19</sup> Identification is a very early and ubiquitous response to fiction; Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote* (1752) and many other eighteenth-century satiric and burlesque novels ridiculed the phenomenon of girls imagining themselves literary heroines, rather as Cervantes mocked Don Quixote for seeing himself as a chivalrous hero. Renaissance men jousted as Arthurian knights out of courtly romance, and coteries of ladies wrote to each other under the names of characters from d’Urfe’s *L’Astrée*. Clara Reeve in *The Progress of Romance* (1785) described romance as making young women ‘deport themselves too much like Queens and Princesses’. Discussing the newer, more realistic romances exemplified by Richardson’s *Pamela*, again she assumed that the female reader – and it is with the woman consumer that eighteenth-century commentators were most concerned – would be influenced by the book to become an obsessive scribbler like the heroine.<sup>20</sup> The fascination with, and desire for, a fictional character is different from the phenomenon of imitation, rarer, more unassuming, more yearning; and in its self-gratification, it makes for a different sort of unease. The theatre authorizes an actor to be the person the author created and in a way allows a spectator to respond with desire. The novel does not. Is this the source of the unease? And is this unease exacerbated by a sense that this private, possible transgression, when made public, has allowed the marketplace to enter and become powerful where it had little business to be?

Of course it is a truth universally acknowledged that, despite Laurence Olivier, David Rintoul, and Matthew MacFadyen, the real Mr Darcy is for our time Colin Firth – and that despite the fact that Olivier played Darcy, Heathcliff and Maxim de Winter, all in different though always romantic modes. Where Olivier’s Darcy hardly seems to have a house or be associated with nature or be extensively looked at by women, Colin Firth’s character famously emerged seductively from his own pool in Andrew Davies’s 1995 six-part BBC adaptation and his clinging wet shirt is in full view of audience and heroine (apparently, during the ‘Darcymania’

that followed there were Darcy parties, at which women viewers watched this scene over and over again). In much the same way Mr Darcy emerges from the road leading behind his house for Elizabeth in the original book, or, more to the point, Heathcliff emerges from various dark places in films of *Wuthering Heights*. For this is surely Jane Austen out of Charlotte Brontë, with a nod to the English heritage tourist industry. We might want regime change but we are not going to get it just yet, for Firth being George VI has only confirmed his place. The internet is full of statements like this from Marti: 'I love Colin Firth's Darcy, for me he is the only Darcy'. This is remarkable when we consider George Henry Lewes's commonsensical comment on literary illustrations of Goethe, that 'no two minds form precisely similar conceptions of the same poetic presentation; each mind forms its own Gretchen and Lotte, its own Frederike and Leonore, its own Dorotea and Otilie; none of these having more than a general resemblance to the images in the poet's mind.'<sup>21</sup> An eroticised object mediated by film is, however, rather different.

More recently Mr Darcy has even travelled beyond Colin Firth and to some strange places; he has become interactive. In the Jane Austen weddings now common, the lady wishes to be attired in a bonnet and empire line dress, but above all she wants to be marrying Mr Darcy – not Edmund Bertram or even Mr Knightley or Tom, Dick or Harry. Then there is the dancing with Mr Darcy at the many Regency Balls, the dream fantasies, the ventriloquising, even the baffling of him. For in the 2008 mini-series *Lost in Austen*, where the meta-heroine enters the fictional world and is attracted to Elliot Cowan as Fitzwilliam Darcy while knowing the original fiction plot, he himself, when in his eighteenth-century cinematic breeches translated to twenty-first-century London, is astonished, then anxious and confounded. Though he convinces in the earlier century, how long could he stay in a modern city before he became diminished into a modern man, the knitted-jumper wearing protagonist of *Bridget Jones's Diary*? Could he tear off the awkward modern packaging and renew himself? Possibly not. The popular imagination can do much with Mr Darcy; he can be coupled with vampires and werewolves, appropriated for any manner of naughtiness; his life can be prolonged, repeated with variation, led off way beyond the original and its author. A reader or even non-reader can put the book and character to whatever use she likes, surely. And yet I think there *is* constraint. Although Mr Darcy is indeed timeless and repeatable, his transformations do have to be limited or he is in danger of disintegrating, as *Lost in Austen* hints. Indeed in many ways he is less mobile than his creator, whose image often breaks through all secure details.<sup>22</sup> For all his apparently free-floating life, there are some ropes to the anchor. Is there, for example, a world in which Mr Darcy is not rich, significant and important or in which he might earn his own living in a dull repetitive way, or not own an estate or great wealth? This degree of counterfactual does not sit easily with him; hence I think we need to exclude the William Darcy of *Bride and Prejudice* who is hardly ever parted from his working laptop. Living with zombies or becoming a vampire is less dangerous to his image than the shadow of a workaday office. In

other words he can live in a plurality of fictional worlds but must retain something secure; and that something is his sexual significance derived from (let's call it) patriarchal, social, economic and psychological power – what Elizabeth Bennet responds to in the garden of Pemberley.

So to summarise, I am arguing that Mr Darcy's present influence began through the interaction of an author's imagination with a cultural moment whose influence came just after she began writing. The character still held something in common with the old perfect-gentleman hero but also took on the charisma of the gothic villain and Byronic hero. Then, after two centuries, the character became a being with whom you could interact and dance at your wedding, the twist being that a girl who opts for an Elizabeth-and-Darcy wedding is actually married, not just in fantasy – and not ultimately to Mr Darcy.

And this is not all the character can do. Jane Austen's fictional hero, who in the book started life rejecting the civic role of the gentleman, through all these transformations ends up himself helping to create a cultural (if not a civic) community. Through its new communications technologies, he helps give to the twenty-first century some shared clubbable coherence, some conceptual space.<sup>23</sup> We can all meet him in the safe democratic Republic of Pemberley without the embarrassment Elizabeth felt when encountering him in the more feudal physical estate of the book. Originally read privately by people whose collective beliefs we neither know nor share, *Pride and Prejudice* has now generated something far beyond itself, more powerful, more commercial and certainly cruder. Can the *book* survive it? After all – and honestly – it is mainly narrative irony, what Mrs Oliphant called the 'quiet jeering', that distinguishes Jane Austen's work from the Mills and Boon company it keeps; and this is largely absent from the transformations.<sup>24</sup> Have we wickedly stolen something by so using, some would say abusing, the book? Are we thieves or fans or just modern people used to ignoring the idea promulgated until recently by serious critics, that canonical novels are morally serious, regulators or exemplars for emotional life through their irony? Does the myth of the powerful cruel man who answers desire and brings knowledge, status, riches and love work simply even here as an escape from the commonplace, a pleasing and needed delusion in which it is as well and as silly to believe?

It's a powerful fantasy for sure, and largely female. Men wanted to copy and be like Burney's Lord Orville; Darcy does not inspire this response in men, but rather desire in women. The twentieth-century American critic Lionel Trilling noted in a very different context 'man's panic fear at a fictional world in which the masculine principle, although represented as admirable and necessary, is prescribed and controlled by a female mind'.<sup>25</sup> This Austen novel, one of the most popular fictions ever written in English, has spawned a thousand other romances, read primarily by, answering the desires of, and controlled by women. Isn't it all rather reprehensible? That fairy story that Mr Darcy embodies drove Jane Austen's near contemporary, the feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, almost wild with irritation. She was no great critic of style and was dead by the time Jane Austen

was publishing, but I think we can speculate that had she read *Pride and Prejudice* with her reviewer's speed she might not have seen its subtlety and sophistication but only its near perfect romance and escapism, and sighed yet again that virtue seemed always to need the reward of a coach and six. She knew the problems of romance, its materialistic aspect and fixation on a magical provider, as of course did Jane Austen – most of the time.

Neither Jane Austen nor Mary Wollstonecraft could have foreseen that two subsequent waves of feminism with their different emphases on gender sameness and equality would make no dent in the utopian desire for such provided rather than earned happiness. *Pride and Prejudice* was escapist in 1813, in 1995 and in 2011. It is to Jane Austen's credit that, writing the first of her Chawton novels, the similarly themed but radically different *Mansfield Park*, while revising her most popular juvenile work, she withstood the temptation to make another hero quite like Mr Darcy.

### Notes

- 1 Margaret Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- 2 James Edward Austen Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2007), p. 117.
- 3 Northrop Frye, *The Educated Imagination and Other Writings on Critical Theory 1933-1963* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), p. 407.
- 4 *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 47. Future page references are in the text.
- 5 There has been much discussion about what class Elizabeth Bennet inhabits. She is the daughter of a landed gentleman with a wife from a professional background. Class as opposed to rank is difficult to define in the late eighteenth century; sometimes the gentry were regarded as part of the upper orders in the country and at other times aligned with the middle class of professions and wealthier merchants, in opposition to the aristocracy which largely held national political power.
- 6 John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1997), p. 102.
- 7 Alistair Duckworth, 'Gardens, Houses, and the Rhetoric of Description in the English Novel', *The Fashioning and Functioning of the British Country House*, ed. Gervase Jackson-Stops, et al., Studies in the History of Art 25, National Gallery of Art, Washington (distributed by the University Press of New England, 1989), p. 396.
- 8 Her looking is as themed as any modern National Trust booklet themes its property according to the assumed desires of current visitors.
- 9 This debate is well summed up in the chapter on *Pride and Prejudice* in *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 298 where Marilyn Butler takes issue with the line of critics represented by D.W. Harding and Marvin Mudrick on one side and Lionel Trilling on the other

who tend to see Elizabeth Bennet either as a revolutionary heroine or as liberated in a manner her creator approves. Jane Austen, Butler argues, has an inflexible morality which firmly identifies errors even in characters basically likeable. Subsequently Butler's view was challenged by some feminist critics including Alison Sulloway, Margaret Kirkham and Claudia Johnson, who see Jane Austen as sceptical of conservative ideology while needing to pay some lip service to it to please her readership.

- 10 Ashley Tauchert in *Romancing Jane Austen: Narrative, Realism, and the Possibility of a Happy Ending* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) argues that Jane Austen's novels, while they do allow the 'rescue fantasy', are real love stories in which women struggle to gain and retain identity and happiness.
- 11 See *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney* ed. Lars E. Troide (Oxford University Press, 1988), I. 47 where Lord Orville is described as attentive to please and (p. 74) praised for treating people of lower status as equals; he is contrasted with his sister, so suggesting that such politeness is a matter of self discipline and practice. Spontaneous feelings often offend and lay a person open to rebuke.
- 12 This differs from the genre of didactic courtship authored by Burney and Mary Brunton which, while allowing some enjoyment of romance, tends in the end to oppose a romance which trumps all other considerations with love.
- 13 See the *British Critic*, February 1813, xli, 189-90 and the *Quarterly Review*, March 1816, xiv, 188-201.
- 14 Malcolm Elwin, *Lord Byron's Wife* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1962), p. 159.
- 15 Margaret Smith, ed., *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë* (2 vols, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), vol. 2, p. 10.
- 16 In *Self-Control*, which Jane Austen had read just before publishing *Pride and Prejudice*, Brunton made her heroine choose between the unruly imperious man and the virtuous polite one. Jane Austen was kinder to Elizabeth Bennet.
- 17 *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S Haight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), VI. 335. Unlike the characters of Charles Dickens or Lewis Carroll, for example, Jane Austen's heroes were never illustrated in that iconic semi-allegorical way of Cruikshank and Phiz or Tenniel.
- 18 Henry James, 'The Lesson of Balzac', *The House of Fiction: Essays on the Novel by Henry James*, ed. Leon Edel (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957), p. 63.
- 19 *The Rambler* 60, 1791, I. 217.
- 20 Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance through times, countries and manners* (Colchester, 1785), I. 67 and 137.
- 21 Lewes, G.H. 'Introduction' to *Female Characters of Goethe, from the Original Drawings of William Kaulbach*, 2nd edn (London: Frederick Bruckmann, 1874).
- 22 In fandom Jane Austen has become a free floating character, sometimes the

object of what Lionel Trilling termed illicit love, at others one half of an intimate friendship.

- 23 According to Edward Greenwood, F.R. Leavis had a notion of a 'third realm' for works 'which are not private like a dream or public in the sense of something that can be tripped over, but exist in human minds as a work of collaborative re-constitution', *F.R. Leavis* (London: Longmans, 1978), p. 11.
- 24 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, March 1870.
- 25 Lionel Trilling, *The Opposing Self* (New York: The Viking Press, 1955), p. 209.

**Report of the Trustees and  
Unaudited Financial Statements For The Year Ended 31st December 2011  
for  
The Jane Austen Society**



**Report of the Trustees  
for the Year Ended 31st December 2011**

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The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2011. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in March 2005 and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

**Registered Charity number**

1040613

**Principal address**

c/o Mrs Maureen Stiller  
20 Parsonage Road  
Henfield  
West Sussex  
BN5 9JG

**Trustees**

Richard Knight  
David Selwyn  
Elizabeth Proudman  
Maureen Stiller  
Fiona Ainsworth  
Bruce Johnstone  
Sharron Bassett  
Tony Corley  
Anthony Finney  
Clare Graham  
Richard Jenkyns  
Marilyn Joice  
Deirdre Le Faye  
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President  
Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Honorary Secretary  
Minutes Secretary  
Honorary Treasurer

**Independent Examiner**

D A Sanders FCA  
Sheen Stickland LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
4 High Street  
Alton  
Hampshire  
GU34 1BU

**Bankers**

Lloyds TSB Bank plc  
40 High Street  
Alton  
Hampshire  
GU34 1BQ

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Governing document**

The Jane Austen Society is governed by the Constitution adopted on 16th July 1994 as amended on 26th July 2003.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Organisational structure**

The society is administered by the executive committee, which in accordance with the constitution consists of not less than 10 nor more than 17 members. The members of the committee are the officers of the charity and between 6 and 13 elected members.

All members of the executive committee (including the officers) are elected by postal ballot of the members of the society for a period of five years and are then eligible for re-election. The executive committee in addition may appoint up to four co-opted members.

On appointment trustees are given information on the role of a trustee and Charity Law.

The committee met three times during the year, and in addition a joint meeting was held with representatives of the branches and groups.

A sub-committee of four members of the executive committee was formed during the year ended 31st December 2007 to deal with the processes relating to the publications of the society. The committee meets as and when required.

A sub-committee of four members of the executive committee was formed during the year ended 31st December 2010 to deal with the processes relating to the educational activities of the society. This committee meets as and when required.

### **Risk management**

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

## **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Objectives and aims**

The principal objective of the Society is as follows:

To promote the advancement of education for the public benefit of the life and works of Jane Austen and the Austen family.

The objective is primarily achieved by the production of publications relating to the life and works of Jane Austen, through education and by contributions to academic debate regarding Jane Austen, her works and family.

The Society, where appropriate, may seek to preserve artefacts relating to Jane Austen, either by purchase or by contributions towards expenses. In particular the society may contribute to projects at Jane Austen's House in Chawton which is in the care of the Jane Austen Memorial Trust.

The Society's objectives for the year were to build on the progress made in previous years and to raise the profile of the Society by the production of new articles and publications.

The Society also hoped to be able to increase its activities in the field of education through the work of the Education Sub-committee.

### **Public Benefit**

The Trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commissioners general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the aims and objectives of the Society and in planning future activities. In particular the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

The trustees believe that they fulfil these objectives through its educational activities and by its contribution to historical research regarding Jane Austen.

**Report of the Trustees  
for the Year Ended 31st December 2011**

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**OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

**Significant activities**

The Society produced or reprinted one publication in the year, "Jane Austen and Tonbridge". The annual conference of the society was again organised by Patrick Stokes and was held in Sidmouth in September 2011.

During the year grants totalling £1,845 were made. Of this total £1,345 was paid towards the restoration of a portrait of the Reverend Edward Cooper and £500 to the National Library of Scotland as part of the Adopt a Manuscript Scheme in respect of the 1816 edition of Mansfield Park.

No applications were received for grants from the educational fund during the year.

The financial results for the year are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 5 of these financial statements.

There was a deficit of income over expenditure on the general fund of £17,054 in the year (2010 - £20,536). There was a increase in overall income of £11,917 mainly due to the receipt of a legacy of £10,000 from Elizabeth Jenkins. The trustees have decided to set up a designated fund with this legacy to be known as the Elizabeth Jenkins Fund. The trustees are still considering potential uses of this fund.

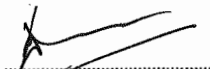
**FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

The committee's aims in the future are to continue to promote the activities of the Society, by the production of publications, the organisation of conferences and any other activities which they consider appropriate.

**RESERVES**

The Society's policy regarding reserves is detailed in note 1 on page 8 of these accounts. The committee consider, on the basis of current information available, that these funds are adequate to meet their known future commitments.

**ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:**

  
.....  
David Selwyn - Trustee

Date: 14. vi. 12  
.....

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of  
The Jane Austen Society**

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I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2011 set out on pages five to twelve.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act)) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of the independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statements below.

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements
- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



D A Sanders FCA  
Sheen Stickland LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
4 High Street  
Alton  
Hampshire  
GU34 1BU

Date: 19th June 2012

Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 31st December 2011

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.12.11 Total funds £	31.12.10 Total funds £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>					
<b>Incoming resources from generated funds</b>					
Voluntary income		26,692	-	26,692	23,117
Activities for generating funds	2	26,746	-	26,746	18,414
Investment income	3	<u>948</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>948</u>	<u>938</u>
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		54,386	-	54,386	42,469
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>					
<b>Costs of generating funds</b>					
Costs of fundraising activities		3,501	-	3,501	5,297
<b>Charitable activities</b>	4				
Charitable activities		53,901	-	53,901	52,706
<b>Governance costs</b>	6	<u>4,038</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,038</u>	<u>3,502</u>
<b>Total resources expended</b>		61,440	-	61,440	61,505
<b>NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES</b>					
		(7,054)	-	(7,054)	(19,036)
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		215,860	1,003	216,863	235,899
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<u>208,806</u>	<u>1,003</u>	<u>209,809</u>	<u>216,863</u>

The Jane Austen Society

Balance Sheet  
At 31st December 2011

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.12.11 Total funds £	31.12.10 Total funds £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible assets	8	58	-	58	78
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Stocks	9	2,545	-	2,545	4,978
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	10	10,821	-	10,821	8,992
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>200,692</u>	<u>1,003</u>	<u>201,695</u>	<u>204,922</u>
		214,058	1,003	215,061	218,892
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due within one year	11	(5,310)	-	(5,310)	(2,107)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>208,748</u>	<u>1,003</u>	<u>209,751</u>	<u>216,785</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>208,806</u>	<u>1,003</u>	<u>209,809</u>	<u>216,863</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>208,806</u>	<u>1,003</u>	<u>209,809</u>	<u>216,863</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>	12				
Unrestricted funds				208,806	215,860
Restricted funds				<u>1,003</u>	<u>1,003</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>				<u>209,809</u>	<u>216,863</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 17/06/2012 and were signed on its behalf by:



David Selwyn -Trustee



Bruce Johnstone -Trustee

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities 2005 and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

### Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Annual subscriptions are treated as income of the year in which they are received.

Life membership subscriptions are transferred to the general fund by equal instalments over a ten year period. No further applications for life membership are being accepted.

Donations and Legacies for the general activities of the Society are treated as income of the general fund in the period in which they are received

### Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

### Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures, fittings and equipment	- 25% on reducing balance
Computer equipment	- 25% on reducing balance

Individual fixed assets costing £250 or more are capitalised at cost.

### Stocks

Purchases of publications for resale are written off in equal instalments over a period of five years. Stocks therefore represent the unamortised portion of the last four years purchases.

Stocks held at branches of publications purchased direct from suppliers by those branches are not shown in the accounts.

### Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

### Fund accounting

Unrestricted Fund is a fund of which the executive committee of the Society has unrestricted authority to spend the income and the capital to further the objectives of the Jane Austen Society.

Designated Funds represent unrestricted funds earmarked for particular purposes by the executive committee of the Society in the exercise of its discretionary powers.

Restricted Funds are funds which are subject to a restriction as to their use.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 31st December 2011**

**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES – continued**

**Reserves**

The balance of the general fund represents approximately fourteen month's expenditure which the committee consider to be appropriate in the circumstances.

£120,000 of the legacies received in the years ended 31st December 2003 and 31st December 2004 was transferred to a designated fund. It was originally intended that the income from this fund would be used to provide travel bursaries to those wishing to carry out studies in furtherance of the charitable objects of the society. It has now been decided by the committee that this fund should be re-designated to cover a wider range of educational activities.

**Branches and Groups**

Branches of the society are defined in charity law as an integral part of the Society and as such enjoy various privileges and responsibilities in regard to the Society. In particular a branch can call upon the Society for financial support and is covered by the public liability insurance of the Society. The financial results of the branches are incorporated into the Society's statement of financial activities and the assets and liabilities of branches are included in the Society's balance sheet.

A group is an informal gathering of members of the society (or others) from a particular area and has no connection in law with The Jane Austen Society, and the financial activities of groups are not reflected in these accounts.

Details of activities of the branches are shown in note 13 to the accounts.

**2. ACTIVITIES FOR GENERATING FUNDS**

	31.12.11	31.12.10
	£	£
Sales of publications	1,561	3,340
Advertising and distribution	412	-
Sale of Annual General Meeting tickets	1,626	1,557
Income of branches	<u>23,147</u>	<u>13,517</u>
	<u>26,746</u>	<u>18,414</u>

**3. INVESTMENT INCOME**

	31.12.11	31.12.10
	£	£
Bank interest receivable	<u>948</u>	<u>938</u>

**4. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS**

	Direct costs	Grant funding of activities (See note 5)	Totals
	£	£	£
Charitable activities	<u>52,056</u>	<u>1,845</u>	<u>53,901</u>



Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 31st December 2011

5. GRANTS PAYABLE

	31.12.11	31.12.10
	£	£
Charitable activities	<u>1,845</u>	<u>2,330</u>

Grants were made to two organisations during the year

6. GOVERNANCE COSTS

	31.12.11	31.12.10
	£	£
Committee travelling expenses	1,578	2,302
Independent examiner's fee	<u>2,460</u>	<u>1,200</u>
	<u>4,038</u>	<u>3,502</u>

7. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st December 2011 nor for the year ended 31st December 2010.

Trustees' Expenses

During the year a total of £1,300 was reimbursed to ten trustees in respect of travelling and other expenses (2010 - £1,974).

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
<b>COST</b>			
At 1st January 2011 and 31st December 2011	<u>750</u>	<u>323</u>	<u>1,073</u>
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>			
At 1st January 2011	675	320	995
Charge for year	<u>19</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>20</u>
At 31st December 2011	<u>694</u>	<u>321</u>	<u>1,015</u>
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>			
At 31st December 2011	<u>56</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>58</u>
At 31st December 2010	<u>75</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>78</u>

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued**  
**for the Year Ended 31st December 2011**

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**8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS – continued**

Over many years the society has been given or has purchased mementoes of Jane Austen comprising items of jewellery, furniture and early editions of Jane Austen's work etc. which are maintained on public display at Jane Austen's House, Chawton. Portraits of various members of the Austen family have also been donated to the society over the years. The latest of these a portrait of John Austen III and another of his daughter Jane were given to the society by Lt. Cmdr. Francis Austen in the year ended 31st December 2009, these are also on display at the Jane Austen's House Museum.

In addition to the items at the Jane Austen's House Museum, the society also has temporary ownership of a portrait of Edward Austen-Knight which was purchased by Colonel Satterthwaite and donated to the society in 1970. This portrait was restored during the year ended 31st December 2010 at a cost of £11,654 of which £5,531 was received in donations specifically for that purpose. This portrait is now on display at Chawton House Library, the donor's intention, however, was that ownership would eventually be transferred to the Knight family.

It is the policy of the society not to capitalise heritage assets belonging to the society. These are in effect inalienable, held in perpetuity and are mostly irreplaceable. Any financially based valuation would be misleading to the value and significance of the material culture involved. The society has a clear duty of care for these assets and to make them available for the enjoyment and education of the public as far as possible, commensurate with their long term care and preservation. The highest possible standards of collection management are applied by those who hold the collection. All enquiries and requests for information will be considered on their merits subject to appropriate security and data protection guidelines.

As the society meets the criteria for the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities it is not required to comply with the requirements of Financial Reporting Standard 30 "Heritage Assets".

Items of Jane Austen memorabilia purchased through the acquisition fund are charged to the fund in the year of purchase. As at 31st December 2011 no such acquisitions had been made.

**9. STOCKS**

	31.12.11	31.12.10
	£	£
Stocks	<u>2,545</u>	<u>4,978</u>

**10. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR**

	31.12.11	31.12.10
	£	£
Other debtors	9,311	7,515
Prepayments	<u>1,510</u>	<u>1,477</u>
	<u>10,821</u>	<u>8,992</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 31st December 2011

11. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.12.11	31.12.10
	£	£
Other creditors	3,150	907
Accruals and deferred income	<u>2,160</u>	<u>1,200</u>
	<u>5,310</u>	<u>2,107</u>

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.1.11	Net movement in funds	Transfers between funds	At 31.12.11
	£	£	£	£
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General fund	78,948	(17,054)	1,002	62,896
Life membership fund	10,912	-	(1,002)	9,910
Education fund	126,000	-	-	126,000
The Elizabeth Jenkins Fund	<u>-</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,000</u>
	215,860	(7,054)	-	208,806
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
Acquisition fund	1,000	-	-	1,000
Alwyn Austen memorial fund	<u>3</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3</u>
	1,003	-	-	1,003
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>216,863</u>	<u>(7,054)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>209,809</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	44,386	(61,440)	(17,054)
The Elizabeth Jenkins Fund	<u>10,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,000</u>
	54,386	(61,440)	(7,054)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>54,386</u>	<u>(61,440)</u>	<u>(7,054)</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 31st December 2011

## 13. BRANCHES

	Midlands £	Kent £	Northern £	Scotland £	South West £	Total £
<b>Income</b>						
Subscriptions	313	1,033	755	861	296	3,258
Income from events	7,765	2,738	2,472	3,227	2,606	18,808
Sales of publications	42	122	531	277	-	972
Donations	-	100	3	4	-	107
Interest	1	-	1	-	-	2
	<u>8,121</u>	<u>3,993</u>	<u>3,762</u>	<u>4,369</u>	<u>2,902</u>	<u>23,147</u>
<b>Expenses</b>						
Expenses of events	7,270	3,378	2,202	3,693	3,158	19,701
Cost of publications	512	737	986	97	-	2,332
Donations	-	-	-	250	-	250
Administration expenses	302	92	274	419	134	1,221
	<u>8,084</u>	<u>4,207</u>	<u>3,462</u>	<u>4,459</u>	<u>3,292</u>	<u>23,504</u>
Branch Surplus/(Deficit)	<u>37</u>	<u>(214)</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>(90)</u>	<u>(390)</u>	<u>(357)</u>

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 31st December 2011**

	31.12.11 £	31.12.10 £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		
<b>Voluntary income</b>		
Annual subscriptions received	14,898	14,339
Life membership fund income	-	1,500
Gift Aid tax recovered	1,400	1,600
Sundry donations and receipts	394	147
Donation re restoration of Edward Austen Knight Portrait	-	5,531
Legacies	<u>10,000</u>	<u>-</u>
	26,692	23,117
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>		
Sales of publications	1,561	3,340
Advertising and distribution	412	-
Sale of Annual General Meeting tickets	1,626	1,557
Income of branches	<u>23,147</u>	<u>13,517</u>
	26,746	18,414
<b>Investment income</b>		
Bank interest receivable	<u>948</u>	<u>938</u>
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	54,386	42,469
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		
<b>Costs of fundraising activities</b>		
Purchases of publications (after stock adjustment)	3,501	4,327
Events insurance	<u>-</u>	<u>970</u>
	3,501	5,297
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Printing and stationery	236	884
Postage and telephone	528	570
Storage	921	919
Subscriptions	210	210
Sundry expenses	107	-
Newsletter	6,274	6,334
Members' database	1,500	1,280
Annual General Meeting	9,028	7,910
Annual Report	8,889	7,670
Restoration of Edward Austen Knight's Portrait	-	11,654
Expenses of branches	23,504	12,266
Depreciation of fixtures, fittings and equipment	19	25
Carried forward	51,216	49,722

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 31st December 2011**

	31.12.11 £	31.12.10 £
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Brought forward	51,216	49,722
Depreciation of office equipment	1	1
Bank charges	839	653
Grants to institutions	<u>1,845</u>	<u>2,330</u>
	53,901	52,706
<b>Governance costs</b>		
Committee travelling expenses	1,578	2,302
Independent examiner's fee	<u>2,460</u>	<u>1,200</u>
	<u>4,038</u>	<u>3,502</u>
<b>Total resources expended</b>	61,440	61,505
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<u>(7,054)</u>	<u>(19,036)</u>



POLITICAL-RAVISHMENT... or The Old Lady of Threadneedle-Street in Danger. / 1847 May 28<sup>th</sup> 1857 by Humphrey S. Jones